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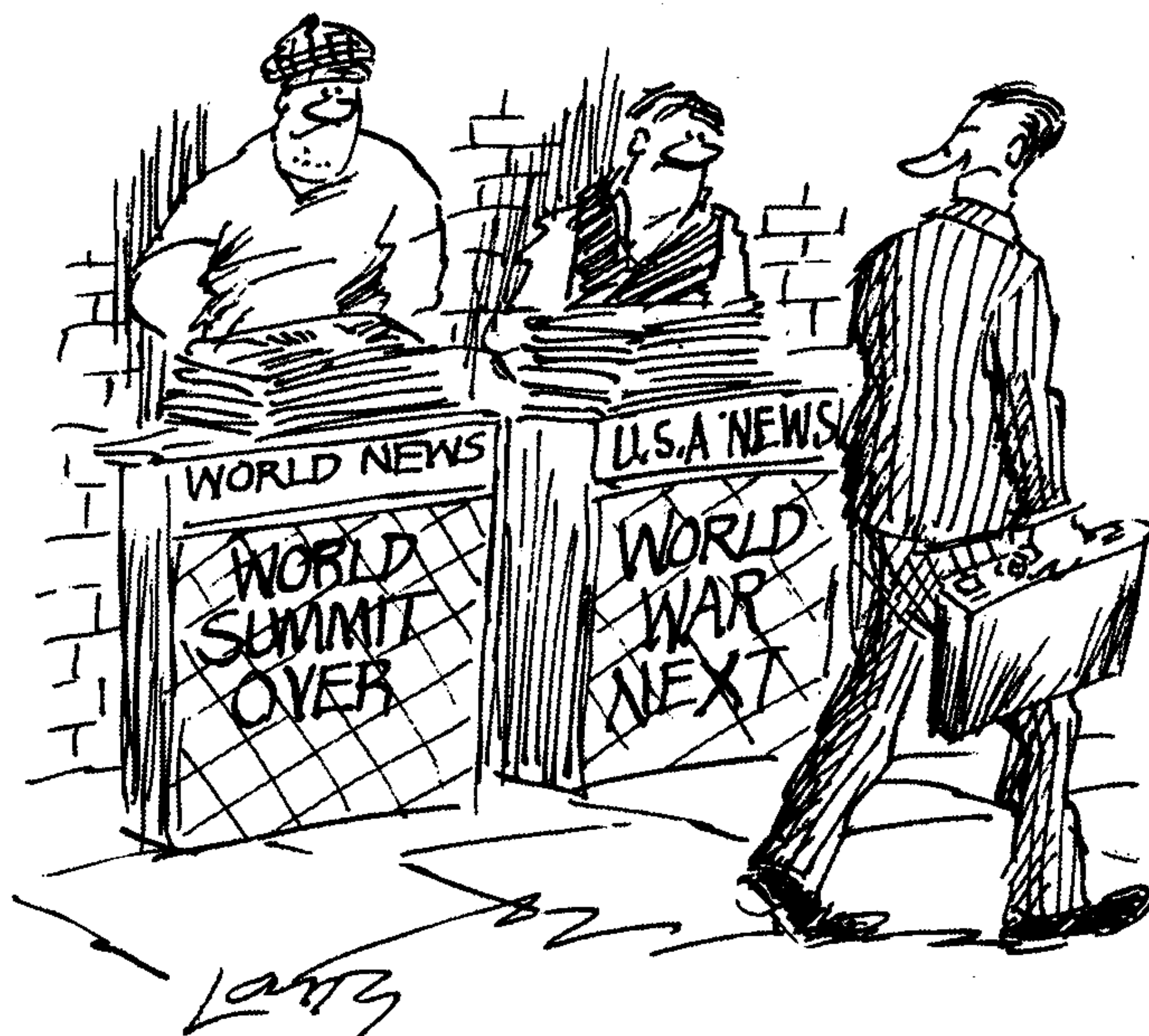
BARRYMORE POOL DEATH LATEST



How did
the man
die?

Bugged
if I know

Witan...

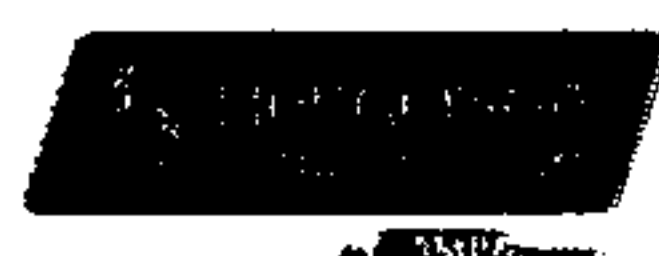


wisdom

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LORD Gnome

(Advisor to the Government on Rural Affairs)

THIS WEEK's Countryside March represents the last gasp of a dying culture. I have the greatest respect for all the country bumkins and in-bred yokel lunatics who will be taking part in this pathetic protest, but if farming is to survive in the Britain of today it must adapt to the changing nature of the world of the 21st century.

Outmoded methods of land use, such as crop growing and animal husbandry, must give way to more imaginative strategies for the countryside.

Farmers, if they are to prosper, must rethink their traditional practises and follow the example of my own estates; what was formerly 30,000 acres of useless arable land in Wiltshire, is now the site of a thriving business park and gated executive home development.

That is the future and the only way to preserve the countryside we love. That is what we should be marching towards.



"Yep, war is like a game of chess"

EDITORIAL

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GOOD to see the Eye's old friend Roger "Currant Bun" Lyons loyally going before his recalcitrant TUC brothers to defend the prime minister's line against Iraq.

Listing the crimes for which the Iraqi government should be held culpable, the Amicus general-secretary rounded off with this clinching indictment: "And no one can forget the babies thrown out of the incubators in Kuwait, so the equipment could be taken back to Iraq."

No one who followed the Gulf War could indeed forget the story, since it was just that – a story. After the war ended it emerged that "Nayirah", the tearful 15-year-old girl who had gone before the US congress to testify to this alleged war crime, was none other than the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the US, and had in fact been in Washington at the time she supposedly witnessed babies being thrown out of incubators.

Coaxed and coached by PR agency Hill & Knowlton, the lucky recipients of a \$10m contract from Citizens for a Free Kuwait (financed by the Kuwaiti government in exile), her heart-tugging fabrication duly had the desired effect of hardening Washington's belief in military intervention in the Gulf. In the senate, where the pro-war motion was passed by just five votes, seven senators said it was Nayirah's testimony which had swayed them.

None of this is likely to bother "Currant Bun" – who, as Eye readers will be all too aware, seldom allows awkward facts to interfere with his public pronouncements, especially when Brownie points with No 10 are up for grabs. Can a peerage be far behind?

JUST when Robin Cook hoped he'd heard the last from his ex-wife Margaret, up she pops again – this time at Labour's Blackpool conference.

The consultant haematologist is joining Roy Hattersley and other troublemakers at a fringe meeting organised by public services union Unison, designed to finish off the government's flagship policy – the private finance initiative – a policy enthusiastically supported by, er, Robin Cook.

ONE little-reported anecdote in actor Tony Booth's memoir, *What's Left*, published last week, concerns the time he almost had a punch-up with an emotional John Prescott.

In the run-up to the 1997 election, Booth, a long-time Labour supporter, encountered the deputy leader on the campaign trail in Oldham. "Prescott came barging over to me, pop-eyed and purple with rage. He bellowed at me: 'You've got a bloody nerve turning up here after what you and that pal of yours have done'. I asked him what I'd done, and he raged: 'Don't come the innocent with me'. The local candidate hurriedly placed himself between us to prevent a fight breaking out, and my partner Steph (now my wife) grabbed me firmly by the elbow and tugged me away."

So what had Booth and his pal – television scriptwriter Ron Rose – done to so upset Two Jags?

In 1995 Rose had prepared a dossier detailing serious allegations of corruption in the Doncaster Labour party, which Booth had handed to his son-in-law, Tony Blair. Blair gave it to one of his aides, Sally Morgan (now Baroness Morgan of Huyton), who phoned Rose and assured him the

Says the funniest things...

- Privatisation on parade: *Crapita Special* 4
- Black is the new cliché... *Hackwatch* 5
- Labour hawks and doves; Reg Varney for mayor? 6,7
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- Zandie gets page-fright; Vicky gets dirty 24, 25
- Why British Energy ran out of steam 26

matter was being investigated. Nothing happened. Early in 1997 Rose wrote to Blair again and the press picked up the story in February of that year.

Instead of congratulating Booth for his part in exposing what became known as Donnygate, the biggest Labour corruption scandal since Poulson, Two Jags almost got into a fight with him about it. Funny old world, isn't it?

OH, YEAH? Mr Portillo joins a heavy-weight team of non-executives... BAE said it wanted to draw on the MP's experience. "He knows the defence business and knows the strategic direction. And just having his intellect around the table will be valuable," BAE said.

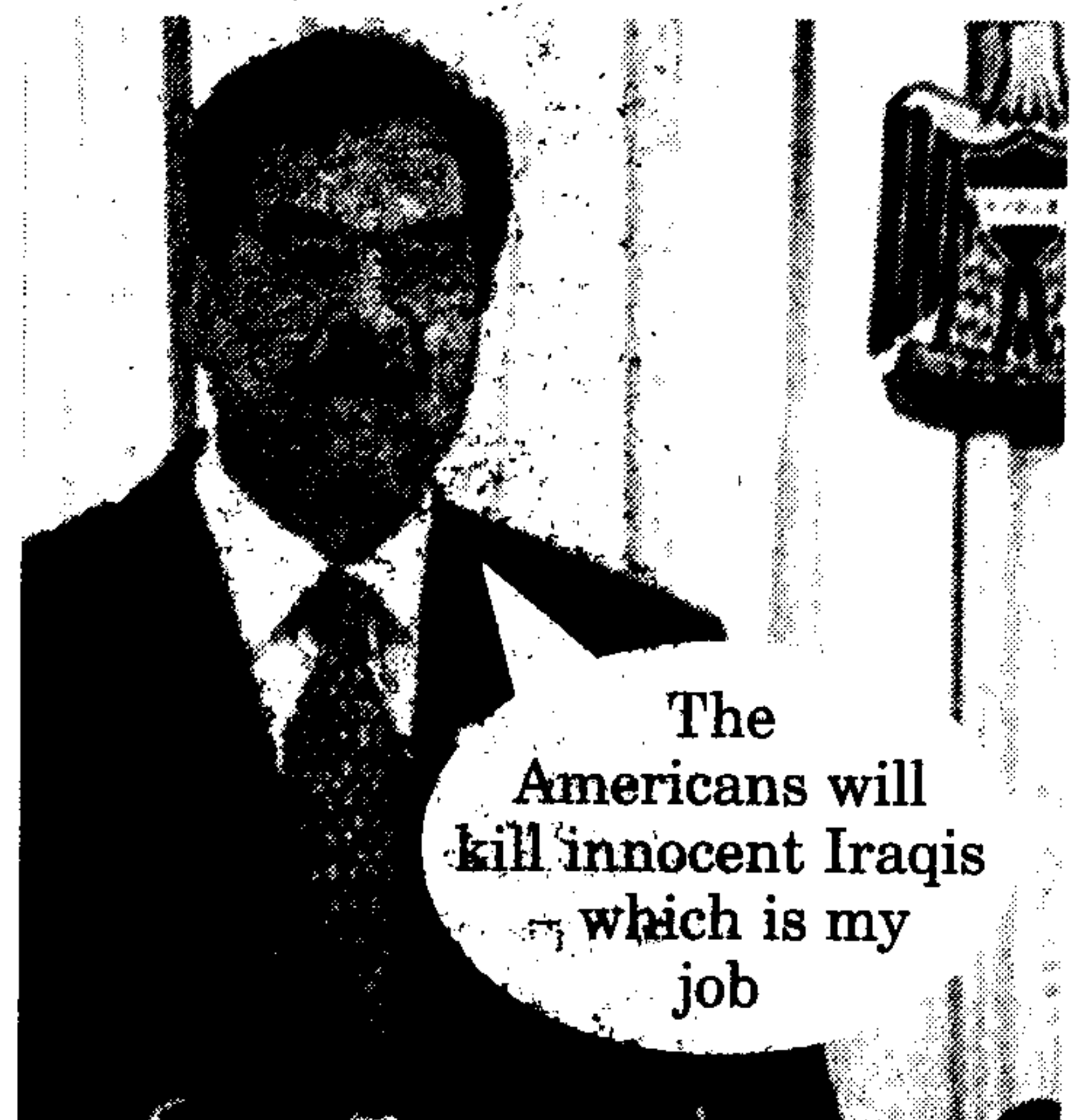
— The Times, 12 September 2002

ONE year after Iain Duncan Smith's triumphant victory in the leadership election, his aides are increasingly desperate to protect the sensitive fellow from mutterings of discontent among his troops.

Duncan Smith recently invited a number of Tory backbenchers for cosy one-to-one chats at which he could explain what a splendid job he's done. Alas, the morale-boosting purpose of this exercise was rather sabotaged by the telephone call each MP received from Conservative central office just before the meeting, giving a list of taboo topics.

Above all, they were told, they must on no account refer to David Davis – even though he is Duncan Smith's deputy. It seems any mention of Davis's name gives poor IDS a fit of the vapours.

7	92	crunching	■ Number of days before Parliament recalled to pay tribute to Queen Mother
			■ Number of days before Parliament recalled to discuss war on Iraq



NEWS

CRAPITA SPECIAL

NEWS that parent helpers at schools are now to be vetted by the criminal records bureau (CRB) – computerised so efficiently by Capita – has raised an important question: will the results be worth the paper they are written on?

Eye readers will recall that the 1999 and 2000 audits of the police national computer on which the checks rely, revealed a staggering level of error.

In the Met area a “totally unacceptable” 86 percent of entries were wrong (a 34 percent increase in cock-ups in two years). Around other police areas the percentage of mistakes in names, aliases, addresses and details of previous convictions varied between at best 16 percent and at worst 65 percent.

Napo, the probation officers’ union, has a dossier of alarming examples. In one case a man facing charges of theft was accepted into a bail hostel because the PNC showed he had previous convictions for only criminal damage and assault. In fact he had a long history of arson, robbery and rape.

PRIVATE contractor Capita is not just making money from its fouled up computerisation of criminal records bureau data. Chaos reins too in the world of teachers’ pensions.

Last month, in a routine mail-out on behalf of the Teacher Support Network, Capita included those retired teachers who had recently died. After causing much distress to next-of-kin, a few days later a grovelling apology from Teachers Pensions was sent to the “Dear relative of...”. This assured relatives that Capita had now identified who had wrongly received the pack and added: “We are aware that it will have been upsetting to have received these packs, particularly from an organisation which strives to have as personal relationship as possible with our members, in a way that respects and acknowledges the significance of their working lives as teachers. Please be assured that this error cannot happen again.”

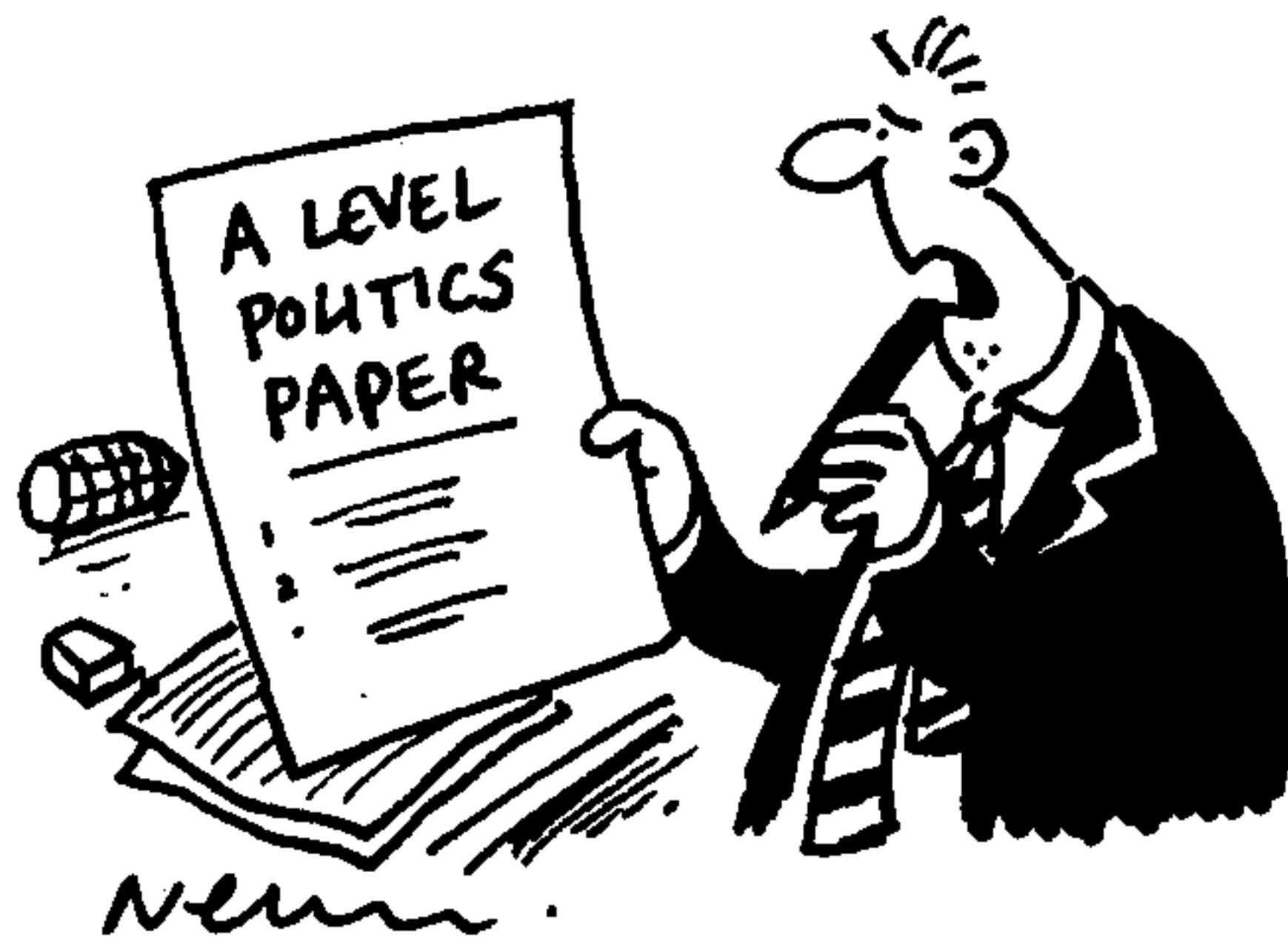
Whoops! Reader Stephen Buckley, whose teacher father died last May, did not receive the original pack but got two letters of apology.

HIGH on Capita’s hitlist of privatisation targets is the IT section of the department of environment, food and rural affairs (Defra), which the government wants to sell to the highest bidder next year in a contract estimated to be worth up to £80m pa.

Even though successive reviews have found Defra’s IT department to work rather well and give taxpayers value for money, “new” Labour’s drive to privatise means it will shortly follow the Inland Revenue, DTI, home office, department of health and Customs IT departments into the private sector. Civil service unions are unhappy that up to 1,000 jobs will transfer to the private sector or be axed and that the department’s public service ethos will be lost.

Defra bosses have made soothing noises to staff that everything is at a very early stage, consultations not complete, etc etc – but neglected to mention that a detailed notice inviting prospective tenderers to register their interest had already been placed in *OJEC*, the European competition journal.

Meanwhile taxpayers can look forward to a possible merger of a large bit of the former Maff, Britain’s most reviled government department, with Capita, Britain’s most reviled company. A marriage made in hell, if ever there was one.



“Exam Boards fix results to avoid rows over education standards. *Discuss*”

Screen OF Shame

CAN anything spoil Dirty Desmond’s pleasure at his new launch of the *Daily Star Sunday*? Only the prospect of a *BBC Money Programme* investigation into his activities.

The programme, due to be transmitted in the week of the Labour conference, features contributions from ex-*Express* editor Rosie Boycott and Dirty Des’s former pornographer-in-chief Deric Botham, who lifts the lid on how Des’s smut empire is run. All most embarrassing for Desmond – and for BBC director Greg Dyke’s chum Tony Blair, whose party is now partly financed by the porn baron. Dirty Des has been lobbying the BBC behind the scenes, but even if he does manage to get *The Money Programme* pulled, however, it won’t do him much good. Channel 4 has commissioned a similar *exposé* of the Desmond empire, which will be screened in the next few weeks.

DESPERATE to impress his bosses at *News International*, James Mcmanus, managing editor of the *Times* supplements stable, has been trying to save money.

His grand gesture? He has cancelled the offices’ Sky subscription for the *TES* and *THES* offices so they can’t watch football, or indeed Sky news, any more. This saves £30 a month. His brilliant cost-cutting comes at a time when the *TES* is about to declare a profit in the region of £30m.

FIVE YEARS ON...

NO ONE really expected the newspapers to keep to their anguished promises five years ago never to use intrusive paparazzi shots again. But one might have expected them at least to pretend to keep to the new press complaints commission (PCC) rules about children that were introduced to protect princes William and Harry.

“Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion,” the revised code stated. “Where material about the private life of a child is published, there must be justification for publication other than the fame, notoriety or position of his or her parents or guardian.”

Still, rules were made to be stretched beyond all recognition, and over the last few weeks several newspapers have begun to look like the Mothercare catalogue.

10 September: BBC newsreader Fiona Bruce says she doesn’t want to present the evening bulletin because she’d miss her kids. Cue a full page of pictures of her four-year-old son and 10-month-old daughter in the *Daily Mail*, courtesy of the long-distance photographers Noble/Draper!

Meanwhile in the *Sun*, the world’s greatest showbiz columnist Dominic Mohan unveils an exclusive picture that proves Madonna’s five-year-old daughter Lourdes looks a bit like her mum.

9 September: “To his legions of fans around the world, Eric Clapton is Slowhand, rock guitar

STANDING by junctions counting cars is usually the province of GCSE geography students, but the first days of this month saw a crack team of *Evening Standard* hacks led by motoring correspondent David Williams ticking clipboards at the capital’s busiest interchanges.

“Soaring pressure on London’s roads is triggering a serious outbreak of bus lane abuse,” Williams duly reported, citing shocking tales of white-line violation from all over the city.

One spot which was singled out for particular attention was Goldhawk Road in Shepherd’s Bush where, Williams reported, “even as traffic wardens were out in force, we spotted 38 drivers and four motorcyclists using a lane between 2pm and 3pm.”

Could this have anything to do with the fact that the bus lane in question – as clearly indicated by large signs – is only operational between 4 and 7pm?

DURING the Johannesburg summit the Grauniad featured six photographs under the heading “The ends of the earth – images of global pollution”.

Among the pictures of seabirds coated in oil and huge piles of rubbish was one of the Blue Lagoon in Iceland, hitherto famous as the home of a celebrated health spa and one of the most environmentally friendly power stations in the world – the energy coming from geothermal “hot rocks” underground.

The following day the Grauniad’s corrections column published an apology after receiving a geyser of complaints from, among others, the Icelandic ambassador. Regretting that the “dominant photograph of global pollution” had been that of the Blue Lagoon, the Grauniad conceded, “far from being an image of pollution, the Blue Lagoon is a rightly famous example of the proper use of natural resources”.

Deputy features editor Sam Wollaston, the man responsible for the cock-up, was packed off to Reykjavik to eat humble pie and pen a further grovelling article of apology, which duly ran under the headline “Sorry, Iceland”. A Grauniad spokesperson explained that Wollaston “had given up his weekend” to go on the three-day expenses-paid trip. Nice work if you can get it.

One question remains unanswered. Does the Grauniad’s deputy features ed read his own paper? During the last two years the Grauniad has published no fewer than seven articles, six of them in the travel section, extolling the healthy delights of... the Blue Lagoon.

legend. But to his little daughter Julie Rose, he is simply Daddy.” This page 3 scoop in the *Mail* is illustrated with four seaside pictures by king pap Jason Fraser. Meanwhile over in the *Sun*, Ken Goff provides a pic of Madonna going for a walk with her son Rocco. He doesn’t look all that much like her. But then he’s only two.

3 September: Princesses Beatrice (14) and Eugenie (12) arrive home from a summer holiday with their parents to be greeted at the airport by... Jason Fraser. While the *Mirror*, *Sun* and *Mail* all use the picture, only the *Mail* follows it with a full-page of speculation on “what this picture really tells us about their ‘perfect divorce’”. So snide is the piece it prompts a letter from Sarah Ferguson pointing out that the real reason she was looking so angry and her daughters so upset was that they didn’t appreciate having cameras shoved in their faces.

Meanwhile both the *Mail* and *Sun* feature several pictures of Lourdes pushing Rocco in a pushchair. They look a bit like each other. Madonna isn’t even there.

29 August: This time it’s the turn of six-year-old Tiger Lily, daughter of Paula Yates and Michael Hutchence, to go for a walk, and an unnamed photographer is in attendance for the *Mail* again. “Constantly grinning and giggling... the image contrasts poignantly with that of her troubled parents,” gushes showbiz correspondent Nadia Cohen. So nothing to do with the “fame, notoriety or position of his or her parents or guardian”, then.

"RACISM appals me and I wish I could get more black and Asian reporters working for us, but they don't come into journalism," sighed Paul Dacre, editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers, to the Media *Guardian* last week.

With brilliant timing, his interview appeared on the same day the only Asian reporter working for Associated's *Evening Standard* and two of her black colleagues were telephoned and told their services would no longer be required.

PAUL VALLELY, associate editor of the *Independent* and prolific commentator on religious matters, has joined the controversy over the *Today* programme's "Thought for the Day".

In the debate about whether secular contributions, as well as religious homilies, should be included, Vallely has argued forcefully in both the *Church Times* and *The Tablet* for maintenance of the status quo.

Happily his views coincide precisely with those of the *Today* faith slot's producer, Christine Morgan, aka Mrs Paul Vallely.

WORLD OF SPOOKS

WHILE the *Washington Post* reported that "Swedish sources say man planned to attack US embassy", and the *New York Times* had to rely on information from "Swedish authorities" and the FBI, one newspaper alone had exclusive access to the inner working of the American spy apparatus while covering the arrest of Karim Chatty. Yes, the world-renowned *Sunday Express*!

As it breathlessly revealed: "A CIA source at the US intelligence agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia, said 'our London embassy was thought to be the target because it is right on the flight path. With the anniversary of 9/11 approaching we have to be mindful that there could be other hijack attempts.'" Although the syntax is oddly unAmerican, the inside knowledge that the embassy in London is "right on the flight path" between Stockholm and Stansted clearly proves that this is a genuine quote.

Access to top-secret CIA information is likely to prove a regular treat for *Sexpress* readers, as the paper has wisely hired self-proclaimed intelligence expert Gordon Thomas to fill its news pages. Other sensational scoops in recent weeks include "SADDAM'S DOSSIER OF EVIL - WORLD EXCLUSIVE by Gordon Thomas" and "EXCLUSIVE: AMAZING REVELATIONS FROM THE FILES OF THE CIA by Gordon Thomas". The 69-year-old hack, who in recent years has preferred to style himself as a "best-selling novelist", has clearly recovered his appetite for journalism since the unfortunate misunderstanding a few years ago which led Dublin's *Sunday Independent* to wash its hands of an interview he conducted (or, as it turned out, concocted) with the sex-mad Bishop of Galway. His previous triumphs included the "world exclusive" revelation that Terry Waite had been murdered by his captors in Lebanon.

Besides being an acclaimed author and top reporter, Thomas is also big in Hollywood and can thus provide the *Express* with showbiz scoops as well. "Diana's Dying Wish to Make a Wildlife Movie with Brad" was the headline over a story on 25 August claiming that the princess had agreed to be the executive producer of *Mambo*, a story about an elephant with a high IQ set in a South African game reserve. "In a conversation with Irish screenwriter Gordon Thomas," it reported, "Diana said she saw the obvious appeal of a movie and asked 'would it be possible for Mambo to rescue Brad Pitt from a landmine?' She added, with her distinctive girlish laugh: 'Maybe it could be a whole minefield. That would be the perfect way to draw attention to the terrible evil of those awful weapons...'" Shortly before her death, according to Thomas, Diana had persuaded Dodi Fayed to put up £5m, "enough to attract the interest of [Brad] Pitt, *Schindler's List* actress Elizabeth

CLICHEWATCH

The Neophiliacs (2)

A YEAR ago Clichewatch tried to shame hacks into not describing everything as the new black, the new rock'n'roll or the new sex. It had no effect whatsoever. Are we downhearted? No: Lord Gnome saw off "ongoing situations" after many years of struggle in the 1970s, and he will eventually preside at the funeral of "the new new". Not quite yet, however...

"Just as grey is this year's black, food is this year's sex." — **Don Grant**, *Erotic Review*, June 2002.

"Angling is the new yoga." — **Sam Murphy**, *Sunday Times*, 2 June.

"Everybody else I interview tells me how busy they are. Busy is the new black, the age's must-have accessory." — **Bryan Appleyard**, *Sunday Times*, 7 June.

"Green: it's the new black." — **Caroline Roux**, *Guardian*, 8 June.

"Staying in was the new going out. Or, as Kings Of Convenience's album title proclaimed, quiet was the new loud." — **Craig Mclean**, *The Scotsman*, 21 June.

"Fat will never be the new black." — **David Wastell**, *Sunday Telegraph*, 23 June.

"Science... is the new rock'n'roll." — **David Lister**, *Independent*, 25 June.

"Yes indeed, modern is no longer modern, which means that the past is now the new black." — **Laurence Llewellyn Bowen**, *Daily Express*, 29 June.

"Why black is the new platinum." — **Joe Morgan**, the *Times*, 29 June.

"Why cashmere is the new T-shirt." — **Anna Burnside**, *Sunday Times*, 30 June.

"Or could it be that settling down is the new black?" — **Miranda Sawyer**, *Daily Mirror*, 6 July.

"History, as they say, is the 'new gardening'." — **Lucy Hodges**, *Independent*, 11 July.

"Croatia... is the new Tuscany." — **Clare Stewart**, the *Times*, 12 July.

"My friend the beauty editor... says: 'Don't tell me you haven't heard of Kabbalah, sweetie. It's the new Buddhism.'" — **Justine Picardie**, *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 13 July.

"Antony Beevor on why history is the new novel." — *Sunday Times*, 14 July.

"Why brown is the new black tie." — *Sunday Times*, 14 July.

"As one Tory insider puts it: 'Policy is the new black'." — **Ed Valzey**, *Sunday Times*, 14 July.

Davitz and Gene Hackman".

Strangely, there's been no attempt to make this exciting-sounding film as a tribute to Princess Di - possibly because none of the actors named knows anything about it. It's all eerily reminiscent of Thomas's revelation six years ago that he was writing a blockbuster Hollywood movie about Ireland's Olympic swimming champion Nicole Smith, starring Michele Kidman as Smith and Tom Cruise as her husband Erik de Bruin. The story was reported in most British and Irish newspapers - and, as so often with Thomas's tales, was total bollocks.

Obviously, however, his work for the *Sunday Express* will be of a much higher standard, especially now that the paper has teamed him up with its legendary foreign correspondent Yvonne Ridley (now a devout Muslim, though still apparently happy to work for the man who owns *Asian Babes*). Although Ridley was once a prisoner of the Taliban, nothing can have prepared her for the far more harrowing ordeal of working alongside Thomas on yet another of his "world exclusives".

"Sport is the new comedy and comedy used to be the new rock'n'roll." — **Alyson Rudd**, the *Times*, 15 July.

"Property is the new sex..." — **Jacl Stephen**, *Mail on Sunday*, 21 July.

"For Archbishop of Canterbury-elect Rowan Williams, black is the new black. 'Williams wears purple as little as possible,' I'm told." — **Charlie Methven**, *Daily Telegraph*, 26 July.

"The in-plant of the moment: *Papaver somniferum*, 'Black Peony'... The sudden popularity of a variety that has, after all, been around for several years may be due to the fact that black, in the world of horticultural fashion, is the new black." — **Mark Griffiths**, the *Times*, 27 July.

"Housework... is the new sex." — **Anthea Gerrie**, *Sunday Express*, 28 July.

"Religion is the new rock'n'roll." — **Paul Colgan and Aine Ryan**, *Sunday Times*, 28 July.

"Mathilde Seigner shows that fat is the new phwoarr!" — **Cosmo Landesman**, *Sunday Times*, 28 July.

"Forget comedy, or cooking: nervous breakdowns are the new rock'n'roll." — **Clifford Bishop**, *Sunday Times*, 4 August.

"It's far more likely to drizzle rain than olive oil but Arran is the new Tuscany for Scotland's Labour elite." — **Jason Allardyce**, *Scotland on Sunday*, 4 August.

"Italian [food] is so last year... Who could have imagined the phrase? Spain is the new Italy. But then who could have guessed that anyone would dare pronounce grey the new black or rocket the new spinach?" — *Scotsman*, 10 August.

"The south of France has become the new Tuscany for Labour's elite." — **David Leppard**, *Sunday Times*, 11 August.

"If management really is the new rock'n'roll, then L. Vaughan Spencer is Bill Haley." — **Stuart Cralner**, the *Times*, 15 August.

"Kate'n'Sam have moved there, Liz Hurley wants to. The countryside - it's the new black." — *Guardian*, 17 August.

"It's a bit crass to suggest that adoption is the new black for these celebs, but..." — **Oliver Bennett**, *Independent*, 19 August (feature on Hollywood stars adopting children).

"Brown is the new black and certainly more fashionable than white." — The *Times*, 31 August, on skin colours.

"We have road rage, air rage, phone rage, even trolley rage at the supermarket... Rage is the new sex." — **Nicola Barry**, *Sunday Express*, 1 September.

"Tartan is the new black." — *Accountancy Age*, 5 September.





So will there be a cabinet split over Iraq? The mutterers have so far included shadow leader of the House Robin Cook, overseas development minister Clare Short and chancellor Gordon Brown. Up until George Bush's speech to the United Nations general assembly, cabinet hawks included the Dear Leader, his foreign secretary Jack Straw and the hitherto invisible defence secretary, Geoff Hoon.

For the doubters the major bone of contention had been that Blair hadn't bothered to call a cabinet meeting to discuss the growing crisis over Iraq, relying as usual on one-to-one discussions with those inside the loop in a Downing Street ante-room. In reality the doubters were relieved that no cabinet meeting *had* been convened: it enabled Brown to maintain a studious silence and keep his powder dry – until the silence became so deafening that even Fleet Street noticed and Brown was hauled in to announce that he stood four-square behind the government.

With the prospect of Bush going it alone fast disappearing, the doubters are coming back on side. The US president's speech that opened the 57th general assembly astonished delegates by its sudden conversion to multilateralism. For good measure Bush announced that the US would be rejoining UNESCO after a 20-year absence and Iran was demoted from being target two in the "Axis of Evil" into being the wronged party during the Iran/Iraq war in the 1980s.

So Bush will get his toughly-worded resolution from the security council; the French will claim they authored it; Russia is likely to receive a healthy dollop of US aid and China will shortly be welcomed into the World Trade Organisation. Saddam, on the other hand, will have a matter of weeks to agree a return of the weapons inspectors or face attack.

So as Tony Blair prepares to face the Labour party conference, the doubters are on the defensive – if they had ever gone on the offensive in the first place. Saddam Hussein may acquiesce to the UN, knowing that support in Arab capitals has slipped away; or he may choose Götterdämmerung. Much will finally hinge on the stringency of the security council resolution; and, if an attack on Iraq is launched, who apart from America and Britain will form part of any multilateral force. The cabinet doubters may not approve of the Dear Leader's methods – but resign on principle? Is that a pig that has just flown past the window?



"The artist is questioning our pre-conceptions about quality"

TONY Banks – Westminster's answer to Reg Varney of *On the Buses* fame – has been strong-armed into standing against Ken Livingstone as Labour candidate for the London mayoralty.

To be fair, not a great deal of strong-arming was involved as "Reg" hates Leninspart with a vengeance and believes he is sufficiently popular with Londoners to be able to depose his former GLC boss. Since Leninspart is making himself very unpopular indeed with Londoners with his "traffic calming" measures to create pre-congestion charge gridlock, "Reg" should be in with a chance.

Not only has Leninspart been refused entry back into the Labour party, but many of his natural supporters ripped up their membership cards long ago. So it should be easy for the animal-loving Banks to have a straight run against the Tories' Stephen "Shagger" Norris? Well, up to a point. Unfortunately for Reg, Ken and comrades have spent months sweet-talking Nicky Gavron, Leninspart's industrious deputy. Gavron, known as the quango queen, has also decided to run for the Labour nomination and with Ken's help is hoovering up trade union nominations in the capital. Banks, better known to remaining Labour party members, is still confident of pulling it off though.

Meanwhile Shagger and Tory central Office are rubbing their hands in glee at the prospect of months of vicious fighting between "Reg" and Leninspart. It could be enough to help ensure a triumph for the Tories in the capital.

NOT all Tories share Shagger's confidence that he will emerge triumphant as the Tories' mayoral candidate, however. "Your friend Ken has lost," whispered Lord Kenneth Baker to former GLC deputy Ilyd Harrington during a meeting of trustees of the Arthur Koestler Awards in Kensington.

"So who are you going to put up then?" inquired Harrington. "A much better candidate than last time," said Baker.

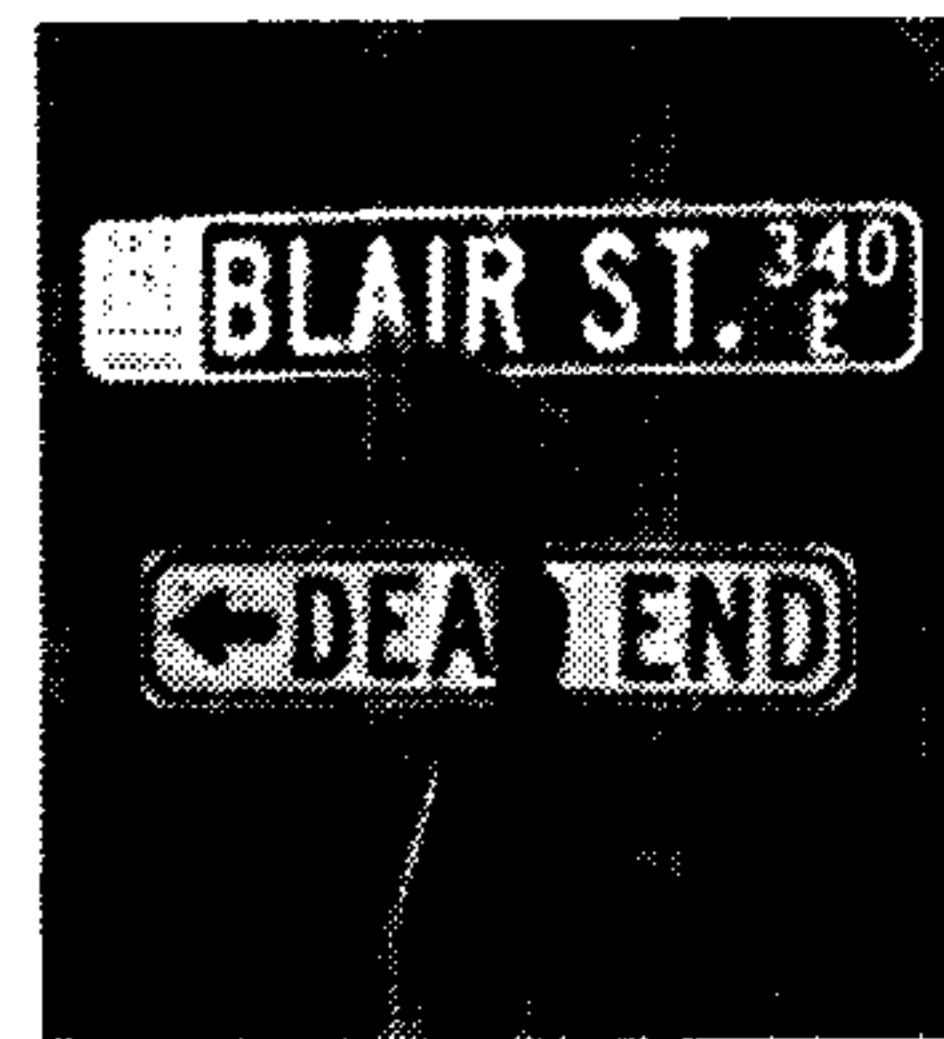
ONCE upon a time, Tony Banks had a reputation for being a fierce leftie. He resigned from Neil Kinnock's shadow cabinet in protest at the Labour leader's support for the Gulf War and for many years was a stalwart of the hard-left Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

In recent years, however, "Reg Varney" has moulded himself into a touchy-feely supporter of fluffy animal rights, while occasionally demanding tough penalties for muggers. During the war in Afghanistan, a clearly emotional Reg approached anti-war colleague George Galloway. Hoping Reg was about to volunteer support for the campaign against American and British adventurism, Galloway was surprised to hear Banks making an emotional appeal on behalf of a prominent Kabul prisoner. "George," he implored, "Please can you do something for that poor lion in Kabul zoo?"

THE financial plight of the Labour party, the worst in its 102-year history, looks likely to lead to some unpleasantness between its paid staff, most of whom are members of the GMB union, and senior party officials during the Labour conference in Blackpool.

The seriousness of the financial problems first came to light in July when a leaked budget document revealed that it owed £6m. Last week the party's official accounts revealed that the operating loss is now running at nearly £9m a year. Donations to the party were down to £591,052 in the last quarter of the financial year, from £3.3m in the previous one. In August Labour's general secretary David Triesman successfully pleaded with union leaders to cough-up £100,000, so wages and utility bills could be paid.

He then told Labour HQ union reps that, due to the GMB having reduced its affiliation to the Labour party by £500,000, jobs would have to be cut to help balance the books. It was not made clear how the GMB reducing its affiliation by £500,000 the previous year had accounted for the multi-million pound deficit. But the message was clear: if Labour party staff lost their jobs, they



I-SPY

Salt Lake City
Submitted by John Rees. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

would have their own union to blame.

Labour's deputy general secretary Chris Lennie, and Kevin Lee, north-west regional director, have since been pushing home that message to Labour party staff in the GMB. On suggestion from Lennie was that they should take the opportunity of the party conference to resign *en masse* from the union. With the threat of redundancies hanging over them, staff have not been stupid enough to take the bait and are now very angry with their bosses. It should all add to the fraternal atmosphere in Blackpool!

MEET Tim Watts, multi-millionaire founder and chairman of Pertemps, the Midlands-based employment agency that's just won the contract to run a New Deal scheme in Solihull.

The government already pays Pertemps to run the Birmingham Employment Zone, the largest such project in Britain. So what is it about Watts and Pertemps that so impressed employment minister Nick Brown, who announced the new contract last month?

In a recent interview with *Professional Recruiter* magazine, Watts reveals that Enoch Powell is one of his heroes and "the most misunderstood person in Britain". He condemns the European agency workers' directive (which proposes that agency temps should not have less favourable employment terms than directly employed staff) as a dastardly act by "viciously left-wing" European officials.

Watts sits on the national council of the anti-euro group, Business for Sterling, and receives quite favourable treatment from his own firm, including a £500,000 salary. His personal wealth is estimated at £40m. Watts declares that Labour's implementation of the European working time directive is "the biggest farce". But when it comes to the New Deal for the unemployed, from which his company earns money, he is rather more positive: "Fantastic – I would give the government nine out of ten".

AS Zurich Financial sheds 4,500 jobs from its global workforce, to whom can the redundant workers turn? In Britain, there's always Sandy Leitch, chief executive of Zurich's UK operations and one of "new" Labour's leading advisers on... job creation!

Leitch chairs the government's National Employment Panel, launched last October at a business breakfast in 11 Downing Street with Gordon Brown and the then secretary for work and pensions, Alistair Darling. According to his department, the panel's mission is to "increase opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged people to get into work and gain financial independence". Nothing wrong with that – so long as not too many others follow Leitch's company's example and slash jobs to make up for stock market difficulties.

In February, sharing a platform at the Smith Institute with employment minister Nick Brown, Leitch said moving people from welfare into work was the "business of business". Sadly, moving people from work into welfare now seems to be the business of Sandy's business.

Though Leitch is a keen advocate of corporate social responsibility, Zurich's record is less than exemplary. Its subsidiaries Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar participated enthusiastically in the great pensions swindle of the 80s and 90s; and, following that mess, Zurich has admitted that 79 percent of its "endowment mortgages", so heavily pushed over the last 10 years, will probably not pay for the houses they are supposed to fund.

IT'S been a summer of change for the spin doctors working for Paul Murphy, secretary of state for Wales.

Out goes former Millbank rapid-rebuttal apparatchik Adrian McMenamin, who previously worked for Trevor Phillips and Frank Dobson in Labour's disastrous attempt to stop Red Ken becoming mayor of London. In comes BBC producer Owen Smith, a sprog of the Taffia aristocracy whose father is pro vice-chancellor of the University of Glamorgan.

Smith's elevation has raised a few eyebrows. He was previously the producer of BBC Wales's flagship political programme *Dragon's Eye*, fondly remembered for its feature on Paul Murphy's trip to Spain this April. The film was mischievously edited to show the Welsh secretary enjoying the tourist sights, wandering around taking snapshots, eating slap-up meals and repeatedly boasting to bored-looking Spanish dignitaries that "my father was a miner" – all to the soundtrack of "Spanish Fly". Either Murphy is a forgiving soul or he doesn't watch BBC Wales.

McMenamin's departure was rather less surprising. Ignoring the rules prohibiting civil-service "special advisers" from expressing political views in public, he was caught posting anti-Plaid Cymru emails to internet newsgroups. Despite calls for his resignation, he managed to survive but then left "voluntarily" this summer after telling a journalist that the Welsh assembly members who had voted in favour of free care for the elderly were "pathetic" and "irresponsible". Ironically enough, his gaffe was broadcast on *Dragon's Eye*, produced by Owen Smith.

McMenamin has now gone to work for the Britain in Europe campaign. If his past record of blunders and balls-ups is anything to go by, it seems unlikely the euro will ever be the British currency.

AS Tony Blair marches unto war, his chief propagandist Alastair Campbell is trying to ensure that we hear the right kind of truth in any forthcoming assault on Iraq.

Campbell has wielded the axe in the ministry of defence's PR department to replace the duffers who kept veering off-message in Afghanistan with some proper spinners.

One key casualty was Derek Plews. Deemed no longer good enough to manage news in the MoD, he is to be John Prescott's spin-doctor-in-chief at the newly created Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Campbell clearly feels Plews should take his gaffes somewhere they belong.

'Backbiter'

STRATEGIC STUDIES

THERE was much shock-horror coverage for last week's report claiming that Saddam Hussein could be only months away from launching a nuclear bomb – mainly because it came from "the respected International Institute of Strategic Studies", an organisation described by the *London Evening Standard* as "one of the world's most authoritative analysts".

The IISS invariably attracts such flattering adjectives. Exactly 10 years ago, for instance, it published *The Balkan Conflict* by John Zametica, an IISS security analyst who had also been employed by the British army as an "independent expert" on the Balkans. "Plans for military intervention in the former Yugoslavia are the preserve of a few 'hotheads', according to an authoritative report published this week," the *Independent's* defence editor Chris Bellamy reported, adding that Zametica's views were "endorsed... by defence sources". General Sir Michael Rose also praised Zametica's "perceptive paper".

Alas! Soon afterwards the authoritative author turned up in Pale and came out in his true colours as Jovan Zametica, chief spokesman and adviser to the murderous Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. For all its alleged omniscience, the IISS had somehow failed to notice that its resident Balkan expert was in fact a raving pro-Serb propagandist and accomplice of war criminals.

MMR UPDATE

AUTISTIC children whose families believe they have been damaged by the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine are petitioning Downing Street and the Scottish and Welsh assemblies to demand better diagnosis and treatment.

Some parents are concerned that their children's health is deteriorating, while others say they cannot access the specialist care needed to treat their children's complicated physical and mental problems.

One parent, pharmacist Julie Loch (*Eyes passim*), says her autistic and bowel-damaged son Oliver, six, has now started having what appear to be seizures, often accompanied by vomiting, which leave him in almost coma like exhaustion. He is awaiting a brain scan.

Rosemary Kessick's severely autistic son William, 11, has also recently started having seizures. Both children have been found to have vaccine strain measles virus in their bowels and in their blood stream. Their parents want to know if it is implicated in their children's increasing neurological problems.

As part of their legal action against the vaccine manufacturers, Oliver and William are at least getting access to specialists. But others are not. The petition calls for a full clinical and medical screening for children diagnosed with regressive autism since 1990 – which involves up to 20,000 children.

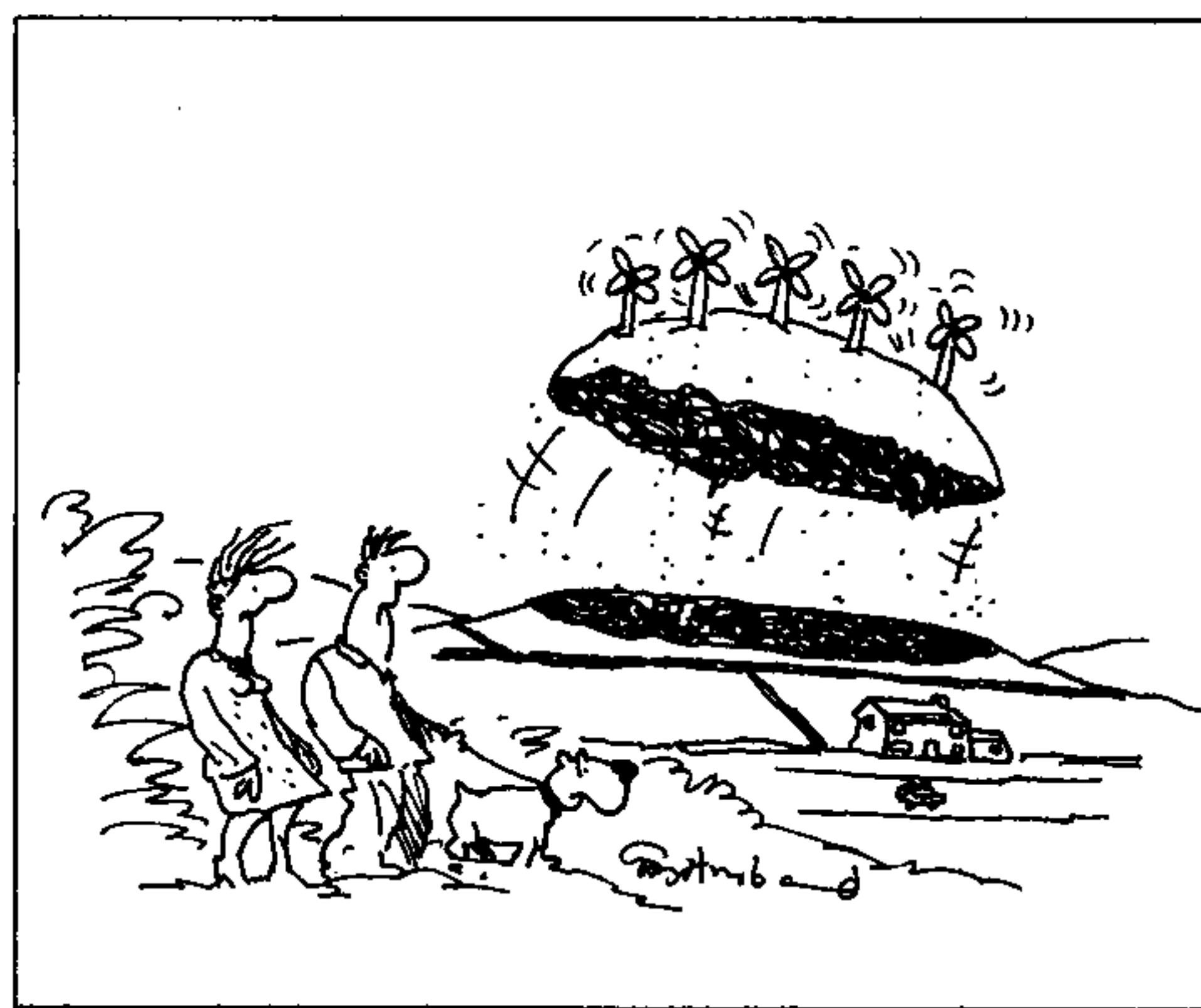
After an education at Eton and then in Brussels, Wellesley enrolled at the French military academy in Angers, against the wishes of his mother who believed he had no talent for soldering.

Kent on Sunday

JUST FANCY THAT!

WHO says the countryside protests are all about class? Judging by the fliers for Liberty Night, an evening of bacchanalian debauchery at a London nightclub the evening before Sunday's "March for Liberty and Livelihood", a different kind of hunting is on the agenda.

"There's no place better to meet the heir to a title and half a county, because all proceeds will be donated to the Countryside Alliance... But for those who don't want to meet someone to take home to meet their parents, there will also be a fair amount of rough trade available. We're talking south London, after all!" it brays, under the delightful slogan "Countryside Shut – Legs Open!"



THE HOT DOGS OF WAR

A FIRM formerly run by American vice-president Dick Cheney stands to make millions from the American and British armies if an attack on Iraq becomes a big enough operation.

Until he stood for office, Cheney was boss of America's Halliburton. He took a massive \$36m pay-off from the firm – and is currently being sued over allegations that he covered up losses there through creative accounting. While asbestos claims have hurt Halliburton's share price, its Brown & Root subsidiary is winning valuable military contracts worldwide.

Last December the US army awarded Brown & Root the 10-year contract to feed and house troops under the "logistics civil augmentation program", or LOGCAP. Thus Halliburton now builds barracks, feeds troops and services US army equipment overseas. It did this work in the Balkans and is now facing a bonanza thanks to the War on Terror as the US creates bases in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Halliburton won a \$9.7m contract to build prison cells for Al Qaeda suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Attempting to oust Saddam Hussein could lead to even more work should the US need to maintain a presence in Iraq after a "regime change". Critics argue that the army's enthusiasm for Halliburton has more to do with the firms' contacts – including vice-president Cheney – than the value-for-money the company offers.

In 2000 the general accounting office, the US equivalent of Britain's national audit office, said the US army had failed to rein in spending by Halliburton in the Balkans. And just as Halliburton was winning the LOGCAP deal, it was paying the US army \$2m to settle a lawsuit alleging that it had fraudulently overcharged for work at Fort Ord, California.

Despite the overpricing, Britain has also given Halliburton contracts in the continuing privatisation of war. Last January Labour's Baroness Symons gave Halliburton a £300m contract to transport the army's tanks – into the battlefield, if necessary. Halliburton's truck drivers will transform themselves into troops if they come under fire. These "soldiers" are also supplied by Cheney's old firm, effectively making them PFI mercenaries under the "sponsored reserves" scheme.

The tank transporters will not be operational until late 2003, so are likely to miss out on early battles against Saddam. But if a war on Iraq leads to longer-term commitments in the region, Cheney's old firm could be driving our boys around the desert.

Halliburton also charges a lot for its services in here Britain. It runs the Devonport nuclear dockyard in Plymouth, where costs to the royal navy have ballooned. However, Cheney has charmed British ministers. In April 2000, while still chief executive at Halliburton, he chaired a conference in Oxfordshire on privatising the military, attended by then armed forces minister Jim Spellar and six senior MoD and army officials. Among the delegates was Peter Ryan, director of the MoD's "public-private partnership unit". Britain's tank transporter PFI deal was extensively discussed. Soon afterwards Halliburton became a leading bidder for the same deal.

TIME

Ultimate Force (ITV1)

WHATEVER you think about Ross Kemp, it has to be admitted that he is one of the very few actors who looks better in a gas-mask. Not having seen him perform in a gas-mask before, we now also know that it improves his acting immeasurably, as by and large with a gas mask on he can't speak.

For Kemp, therefore, Sergeant Henno Garvie may be the role he was born to play. Henno is the lead tough guy in ITV's new SAS drama *Ultimate Force* and it's hard to believe that it wasn't written with him in mind, as it plays to all his strongest suites: that mildly disturbing wife-beater face he does so well, the boot-camp bully boy voice and his inability to form a genuine smile. After several ITV false-starts Kemp's writing team have realised that their man is neither a caring family guy (*Hero of the Hour*) nor a lawyer with a conscience (*In Defence*). But give him a tight T-shirt and he can scowl with the best of them.

Monday night's plot involved the bleeding, literally, of a new recruit after a bank heist unexpectedly turned into a hostage crisis. The criminal mastermind "Boss" wore a trilby and a trenchcoat, but still ended up in bits after Jamie, the new recruit, opened up a whole can of whoop-ass all over him. Kemp patted his protégé on the

back and then applied the coup de grace by blowing away the one remaining, and largely innocent, gang member. Henno, you see, does things his way. Or as he said later, with the kind of clinching aphorism that would have had John Prescott reaching for his pen: "I know what I know."

But it wasn't all so thoughtful. Mostly the programme stuck to its guns, guys and gobbledegook, reasoning that viewers don't tune in to a Ross Kemp vehicle called *Ultimate Force* for moral education.

Beginning with the military hardware, Kemp's radiant pate was only one of a veritable arsenal of deadly weaponry on

Force – and one that will undoubtedly make it a huge hit – is that with a balaclava and a pump-action patter-gun loaded with buzzwords, even Noddy Middle-Manager can make like Andy McNab. Sentences like "He's just a Rupert, now get your vindaloos on and initiate explosive entry to isolate those X-rays" were fired-off with the deadly insistence of a semi-automatic. There's so much of it that when one squaddie opts to let rip a "Harvey Wallbanger", it's hard to know if he's talking about a complex entry procedure or just making another fart gag.

It has been widely publicised that celebrity SAS man Chris

Ryan was a consultant on the series, and he also gets a cameo. It is to be presumed that it was he who supplied the patois, the procedure and the blokeish ambience, to lend some credence to an obviously preposterous tale. Of course, if part of the sell is that this is exactly what the SAS is like, it raises some more distasteful considerations. Forgetting the fact that the force at the frontline of modern diplomacy could feasibly contain Ross Kemp, if Ryan is to be believed, the big

joke for the world's best killers is that the briefcase boys always tell them not kill anyone, but wouldn't you know it they always kill everyone. Luckily they're really good at killing everyone, so that's dandy.

And then there's the scheduling. Right up to transmission the producers have been ready to "put it on ice if there's a war". Although there is not yet a war, targeting 16-34 year-old men with "Let's roll" rhetoric and kill 'em all candyfloss certainly makes having one a very exciting prospect. Just give us Ross Kemp, a thermic lance and a Harvey Wallbanger, and Saddam'll be crawfish on toast.

'The Zapper'



"Oh no... we're too drunk to turn it off..."

display, all designed to give the gun lobby sweaty palms. *Ultimate Force* was an orgy of Hecklers, Kochs, thermic lances and stun grenades, with enough firepower on display to distract attention away from the plot, and drown out the dialogue.

When it came to the guys, in a neat twist the army stereotype of boorish buffoons was amply confirmed. Apart from shy, sensitive Jamie (he gets the girl) the rest joshed about like men in uniform are supposed to, "being the best" whilst occasionally "siphoning their pythons". One killed a cow and they ate it for supper.

But where the show really hit paydirt was with the jargon. The idea behind *Ultimate*

MEDIA NEWS

A ROWDY debate on "whither *Panorama*?" was held in the BBC council chamber last week to mark the publication of Richard Lindley's history of the programme. The present *Panorama* team took a fearful battering as countless grizzled current-affairs veterans stood up to complain about the show's graveyard slot and lack of journalistic clout.

At last, however, a white-bearded gent spoke up in their defence. "I want you to know your programme is just as good as it's ever been," said Phillip Whitehead, the Labour MEP and former TV producer. "Keep it up. Don't believe the critics."

Whitehead was accosted afterwards by yet another disgruntled ex-*Panorama* hack, Tom Bower. "Have you actually watched the programme lately?" Bower boomed.

"No, I haven't seen it for years," Whitehead confessed shamefacedly. "I just felt sorry for them."

"IRAQ could assemble a nuclear weapon within months," screamed a shocking headline at the top of the *BBC News at Six* on 9 September, reacting to publication of a report into Saddam's apparent weapons capability.

With viewers hooked, Fiona Bruce then introduced a series of "in-depth" briefings about this terrifying "news". "Let's examine the details," said David Shuckman. "None of the report is very new..." *Whoops!* In fact, said Shuckman, there was no evidence in the report that Saddam is nuclear capable.

THE results of the BBC's review of political coverage can already be seen in the increasingly pisspoo *News at Six*.

Apparently focus groups have revealed that viewers feel "excluded" from much of the Beeb's Westminster coverage. As a result, viewers are being treated to a more "user friendly" political item. "Let's have a look at how ordinary people are taking politics into their own hands," said Fiona Bruce, introducing it. A pointless interview by Navdip Dhariwal followed in which an "ordinary" woman revealed that she was making a peace banner "to be taken on a demonstration later this month".

THE BBC World Service's unrivalled reputation among 150 million listeners has been built on the understanding that the world may see things differently from us.

But such editorial sensitivity was swept aside on the anniversary of the 11 September attacks on the US. World Service director-general Mark Byford and his deputy Nigel Chapman insisted that the network should broadcast the minute's silence led from Ground Zero in full. Staff who pointed out that this was offensive to listeners in places like the Balkans, Kashmir and Afghanistan, whose own local tragedies go uncommemorated, had their concerns briskly dismissed.



FOR years the *Daily Mail* has bashed the BBC relentlessly while giving ITV a comparatively easy ride. Now, however, the *Mail* seems to have switched sides.

On Friday 30 August, a day before the BBC made its presentation to UEFA in an attempt to win the rights to Champions League football, the paper ran a markedly pro-Beeb story about the negotiations which read like a straightforward plant from Television Centre. Then, on 3 September, it printed a vitriolic anti-ITV story written by Mark Palmer: "A Million Viewers Go Missing as *The Premiership* Fails to Hit the Target."

Palmer's main contention was that ITV's Saturday-night football programme was attracting at least a million fewer viewers than the BBC's *Match of the Day* did two years ago, before the Premier League switched channels. But the actual ratings, comparing Saturday 31 August 2002 with the same weekend two years earlier, were as follows: ITV – 4.3m; BBC – 3.8m. Although these figures were reported in several other newspapers that day, Palmer and the *Mail* chose not to mention them.

Why is the *Mail* suddenly giving ITV the sort of kicking it normally reserves for the BBC? No doubt it is wholly unrelated to the recent departure of ITV News boss Nigel Dacre, who returned from holiday a few weeks ago to learn that his "resignation" was imminent. Nigel Dacre's big brother is... *Daily Mail* editor Paul Dacre.

"CORONATION Street returns in half an hour," promised a continuity announcer half way through an hour-long chunk of the increasingly dull ITV soap. But why the odd interruption?

Surely it wasn't just to bring an edition of *Tonight With Trevor McDonald*: "Target Saddam: Is War With Iraq Now Inevitable?" to slumbering Corrie fans? No. The real reason for the appearance of a current affairs programme in this peak time slot was that over on BBC1, a long-running plot line concerning an affair in *EastEnders* was about to come to a dramatic and audience-grabbing conclusion. Another dip in *Street* ratings would have been embarrassing in the extreme.

C4 POLITICAL editor Elinor Goodman made one person happy at least during the TUC's Blackpool conference.

While interviewing senior trade union leaders on Tony Blair's policy on Iraq, her eyes fell on Alf Goldberg, secretary of Blackpool Trades Council. A pensioner and potent Blair critic, Alf had volunteered to check delegates' passes for the duration of the conference.

"Ms Goodman appeared to think that I was a general-secretary and was delighted with my trenchant views," said Alf. "I couldn't bring myself to tell her that I was minding the doors for the week."

JUST FANCY THAT!

"WITH ratings of just 1.3million, viewers are at last tiring of the sultry, simpering one," wrote the *Mail on Sunday's* Night and Day magazine, advising readers to "SWITCH OFF Forever Summer with Nigella" this week.

How embarrassing then that the paper splashed out a large sum of money for the rights to Nigella Lawson's book which accompanies the series, and began its serialisation with a proudly-trumpeted exclusive 16-page part work on the same day!

"Officials are pretty terrified around the whole of Europe about how to confront some of these huge vested interests."

Item on obesity, BBC News Website

DUMB BRITAIN

- *The Weakest Link*, BBC1/2
- **Anne Robinson:** Which Italian city is overlooked by Vesuvius?
- **Contestant:** Bombay.
- *Brainy Mechanic* quiz, RI:SE, C4
- **Presenter:** Which mountain range separates France and Spain?
- **Brainy Mechanic:** The Himalayas.
- *Afternoon Show*, BBC Radio Bristol
- **Steve Yabsley:** What's the highest mountain in the UK?
- **Contestant:** Mount Etna.
- *Fifteen to One*, Channel 4
- **Q:** Which mobile phone company has the slogan "The future's bright, the future's orange?"
- **A:** Virgin.

DUMB AMERICA

- *The Weakest Link*, NBC
- **Anne Robinson:** Which European capital city is served by Charles de Gaulle airport?
- **Contestant:** Britain.

DUMB BRITISH AIRWAYS

A RIDE on the British Airways London Eye is supposed to be an educational experience, with views of many of the capital's historic monuments.

But it's not as educational as the company hopes. Its official guidebook tells visitors that Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square was "erected to celebrate Nelson's victory over the Napoleonic forces at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815".

Er, as any fule kno, Nelson was killed by musket fire at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

AD NAUSEAM

THE forecast for the advertising industry remains deeply depressing. Or not – depending to whom you listen.

Back in June, in what was effectively a profits warning, prolific Cassandra Martin Sorrell, chief executive of WPP Group, said there were "few, if any" prospects of recovery before the end of this year. Over the next few weeks several other big fish were equally gloomy. Cordiant, which owns Saatchi & Saatchi, Havas and media group Zenith Optimedia, agreed there would be no advertising recovery this year. As ever, 11 September was to blame.

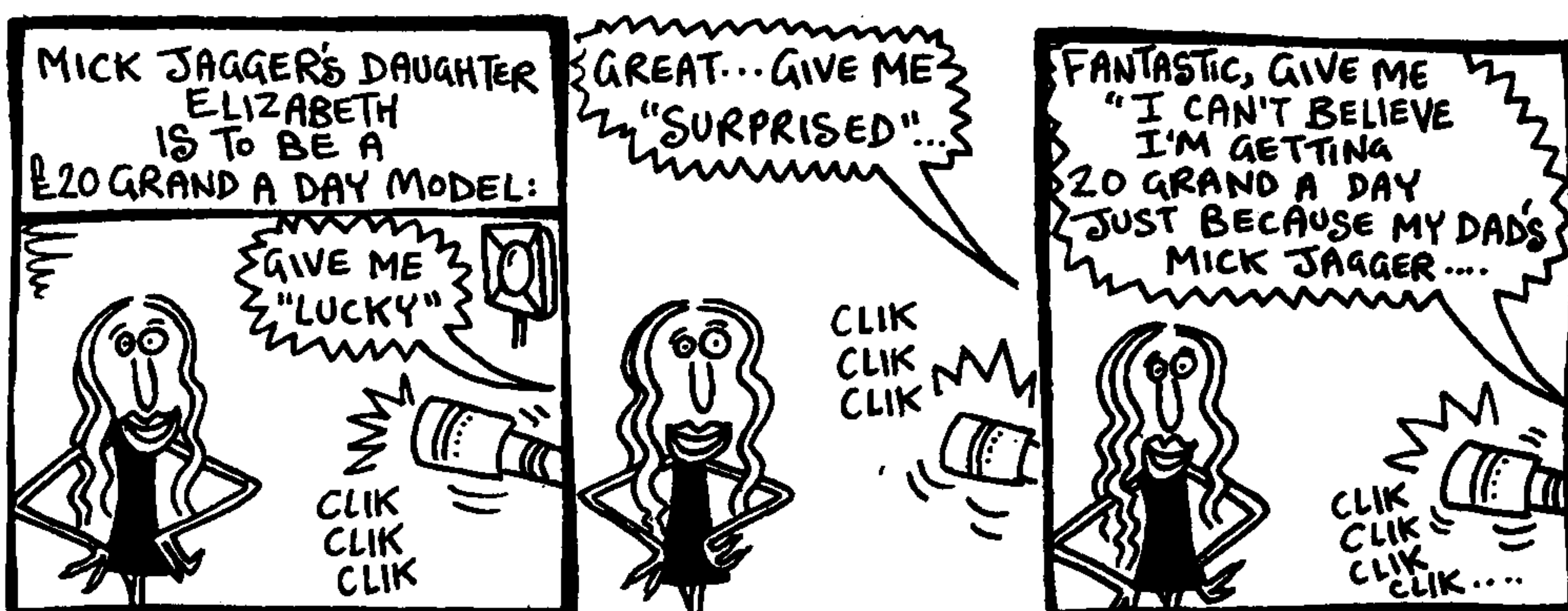
But hark! Only a month later ITV executives were claiming that revenues for October were likely to be up 6 percent, the sixth consecutive monthly rise. This came a week after "experts" at merchant bank Credit Suisse First Boston had cut forecasts for ITV because the expected advertising recovery was, apparently, delayed.

A day later the wind changed again. "Experts"



SUPERMODELS

K E R B E R



SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Naomi Campell Soup

at Merrill Lynch predicted that advertising sales would barely grow next year. Oh yes they would, retorted Zenith Optimedia (the same company reading the last rites three months earlier), with another report saying US adspend would rise by 7 percent a year until 2007, with the usual knock-on effect in the UK.

Last week Aegis, owners of the Carat media-buying group, announced a rise in profits and claims of growth in the US market. UK adspend has, we're told, actually risen in the second quarter by 1.1 percent. Now the clever chaps at JP Morgan tell us that US adspend is predicted to rise by 2 per cent this year, with TV and radio in the vanguard.

In this fog of obfuscation, the only reliable conclusion is that neither the industry nor the analysts it employs has the slightest clue which way advertising is heading, although that has not stopped them from having a guess.

HATS off to Westminster city council for taking on the flyposters. Flyposting is illegal and it's long been a mystery why more companies aren't prosecuted, as shoe chain Footlocker was last month.

Westminster sent postcards to 150 ad agencies saying it planned to "name and shame" firms guilty of flyposting. An admirable gesture; but given that the names of the parties concerned are already emblazoned over every building site and backstreet, it's hard to see what naming them again will achieve – except more publicity for the culprits.

Nonetheless the Advertising Association is backing the campaign. It might start by visiting ultra-cool agency Mother, whose flyposters for a company called Britart took the top prize at last year's prestigious D&AD awards.



SIGNAL FAILURES

How they are related

THE absence of an independent rail watchdog is growing more obvious as services decline but fares rise and companies get huge bailouts in secretive deals.

Nobody challenges the cosiness between the industry's most powerful people and the main beneficiaries of their largesse. The government washes its hands of the shambles, leaving the strategic rail authority (SRA) to reward private-sector failure as it likes.

The nearest things to watchdogs are the regional rail passengers committees (RPCs) and their umbrella organisation, the rail passengers council. They're good at forcing companies to give badly delayed travellers the odd £50 in vouchers; but when it comes to sums like £50m the RPCs have no influence over the SRA, government or train operators. Last year the local RPCs formally investigated First Great Western's pisspoo service. They blamed under-investment – but the SRA has deferred modernisation to 2012 or later.

The RP council, meanwhile, got so excited when the SRA decided to rescue Virgin Rail from annihilation in July (*Eye* 1061), it demanded a public inquiry into the decision and the whole west-coast renewal fiasco. Failing that, the council could hold a statutory investigation, said chairman Stewart Francis boldly. A meeting with SRA head Richard Bowker seems to have brought him to his senses though and made him realise that allowing Virgin to drop about £1.5bn of promised franchise payments to the public purse does not require investigation. Bowker also got to address the council's meeting last week, when he said giving other companies the chance to replace Virgin would be "wasting money".

Although the west coast problems are much bigger than those investigated by the RPCs on Great Western, there will be no inquisition highlighting the roles played in Virgin's original deal by:

- Virgin Rail high-flier Richard Bowker, now SRA chairman and chief executive;
- Virgin Rail legal adviser Tom Winsor, now the rail regulator who is *still* allowing Richard Branson a monopoly on key chunks of the west-coast line after the reason for it has collapsed (*Eye* 1042);
- Virgin Rail consultant Jim Steer, who became SRA managing director of strategic planning after strategically planning Virgin's monumental cock-up.

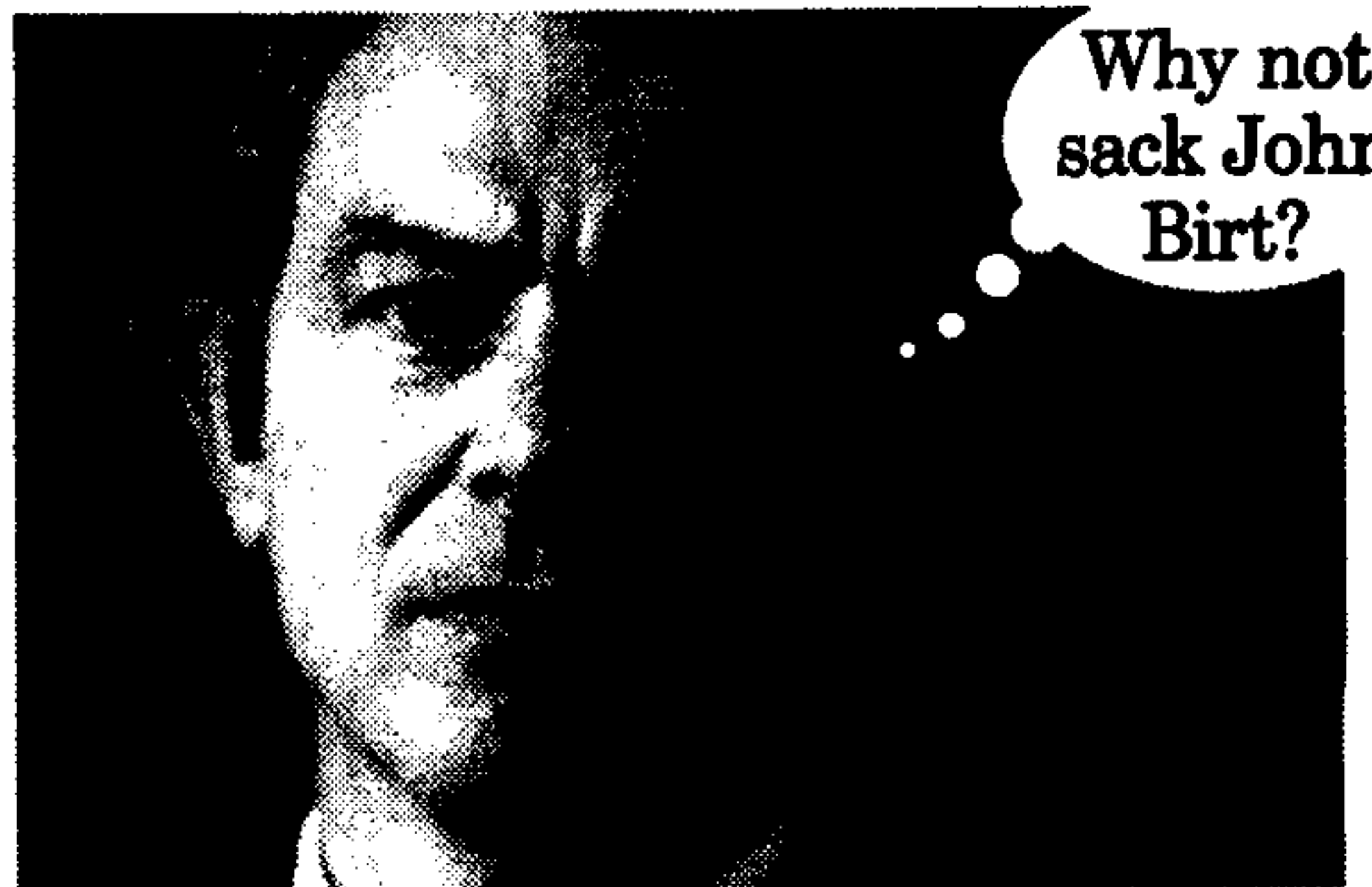
Naturally the decision to drop the matter has nothing to do with the fact the "watchdogs" are funded and appointed by the SRA.

Beardie Branson isn't the only one with friends in high places. Stagecoach is struggling with its Coach USA subsidiary – where Bowker's dad was sent in 2000 as senior vice-president, operations. How fortunate that Stagecoach owns half of Virgin Rail, recently released from its obligations and promised an initial bailout of £106m by Bowker Jr.

But what happens if you don't have seats at top table? Well, apart from being open to an embarrassing investigation like First Great Western, your franchise could be shrunk. The new South Central franchise was to last 20 years and create a London-Brighton route via Lewes; now Bowker has cut Govia's term to the traditional seven-year period and no line will be electrified. Bowker says the money can be better spent elsewhere. Does he mean bailing out Virgin? Or did he have in mind the £29m he handed Stagecoach's South West Trains for works enshrined in its not-yet-legal 20-year franchise deal?

PS: Tony Blair won't want to delve too deeply into what's going on or things might be off-key next time he plays guitar at a party and wants Richard Bowker to accompany him on keyboard. That would be a shame after they made such fabulous music together at a French chateau this summer.

BLAIR'S BLUE SKY THINKING



- THE strategic rail authority recently boasted a 9 percent growth in UK rail freight. But as Philip Mortimer, research fellow at Sheffield University, points out, the SRA's figures were based on a combination of weight multiplied by distance travelled.

Government figures show that the actual amount of cargo lifted on to the trains has actually fallen by a million tonnes in the last year. So what is really happening is that less cargo is simply being shifted further – nothing to gloat about given the congestion on Britain's roads.

'Dr B. Ching'

May to
September

7

Number
crunching

- Number of people killed in the Potters Bar train crash in May
- Number of million pounds in bonuses awarded to Railtrack directors and managers in September

DOING THE ROUNDS

THE persecution of Dr Huw Llewelyn by Carmarthenshire NHS Trust continues (*Eye* 1056).

Llewelyn was sacked on 21 March largely because of a poorly-researched report from the Royal College of Physicians which accepted criticisms made against him by a hostile specialist nurse and her supporters. The report came to the startling conclusion that Llewelyn should stop practising medicine; but the General Medical Council could find no evidence of misconduct and deemed there was no case to answer.

However, the medical director of the trust instigated an extraordinary disciplinary process at which Llewelyn was not allowed to defend himself and which never cited any specific example of wrongdoing. The trust suddenly

stopped his salary and told Jane Hutt, the Welsh health minister, that he had been "summarily dismissed". This implied gross misconduct and denied him both an appeal to the secretary of state and any temporary restoration of his income pending an appeal.

Llewelyn's crime was to raise concerns about standards of diabetic care. The local coroner is still trying to investigate Llewelyn's allegations about the care and subsequent death of a diabetic man who was cremated without a post-mortem examination or discussion with the coroner, and whose infected leg and amputation was omitted from the death certificate.

Unfortunately for Llewelyn, his allegations came at a particularly sensitive time for the trust. The "wrong kidney" was removed at the sister hospital in Llanelli (*Eyes passim*) amid huge publicity, and shortly after another patient died after an analgesic drip was programmed incorrectly. The trust was subsequently convicted

under the health and safety legislation.

Jane Hutt also asked the Commission for Health Improvement to investigate the trust. Its report was highly critical, drawing attention to shortcomings in disciplinary processes, safety and nurse management. The last thing it needed was Llewelyn raising more concerns about precisely these issues. Welsh assembly civil servants helped the trust draw up an action plan to rectify the deficiencies outlined in the CHI report but their subsequent treatment of Llewelyn suggests no progress.

In April Llewelyn asked the employment tribunal in Cardiff to restore his income temporarily. Alas the trust barrister (the eminent and not inexpensive Paul Epstein, summoned hastily from London) argued successfully that the tribunal should deny Llewelyn any temporary income unless he could show that he would inevitably win at the main hearing. Llewelyn sought leave to appeal to the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) in London. The EAT judge ruled on 4 September that there would have to be a full EAT hearing to decide the amount of evidence needed to give him temporary help.

So there now has to be an expensive EAT hearing in London and a possible rehearing of last April's Cardiff hearing before the main tribunal hearing in Cardiff in November. This complexity is just to try to get Llewelyn some temporary income. It is undoubtedly costing the taxpayer far more than the modest income the trust has blatantly withheld in breach of contract from Llewelyn and his family to try to break their will so they will go away in despair.

Ultimately Llewelyn's penniless predicament is the fault of the Welsh assembly, which has not allowed a doctor to appeal when he is sacked without being told what he has done nor had any right of reply. Small wonder medical recruitment is so dire in Wales.

M.D.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY



■ ROTTEN BOROUGH ■

TIME'S UP



In happier days...

FOLLOWING the decision of the audit commission to allow district auditor John Magill to investigate fresh allegations of Dame Shirley Porter's gerrymandering in Westminster (*Eye* 1060), Dame Shirl received a further shock courtesy of the High Court. In August it gave her until 13 September to cough up the millions of pounds in surcharge money she still owes over the "homes for votes" scandal of the 1980s.

The latest ruling means Porter owes a grand total of £36,966,542, after Westminster council won the right to backdate interest 15 years to 1987. Although granted leave to appeal the backdating of interest, Dame Shirl – now living in comfortable exile near Tel Aviv – was denied the right of appeal against paying the remaining £27m by Friday 13th after conceding that she had no defence to offer. With Porter's legal avenues finally exhausted, she no longer has any excuse not to reach for her chequebook, other than the old one about her £70m fortune mysteriously no longer existing.

As last Friday's deadline came and went a council spokesperson told the *Eye*: "Westminster council will take whatever action is necessary to recover the money. We will certainly not let this matter drop." Hmm. It is not clear what Westminster can do next, now that the former arch-Thatcherite has put two fingers up to the British legal system, just as she once put up two fingers to local democracy. Or perhaps that's unfair. The cheque is surely in the post.

I'M A COUNCIL OFFICER. . . GET ME OUT OF HERE!

BARKING and Dagenham council chief executive BGraham "Club Class" Farrant is famous for his blue sky thinking". He recently hosted an exciting "team building" exercise at a sports centre, where 180 managers spent the day and £20,000-plus of

taxpayers' money playing a game called "The Gold of the Desert Kings".

The officers were offered a choice of silly head gear – Arab head-dress or pith helmet – before being divided into teams. Sand was liberally strewn around to help the players imagine they really were in the desert. Joss sticks were burned to add to the, er, authentic atmosphere.

Teams were told that to "survive" they would have to try to earn extra food and water from the "Mystic of the Desert", who turned out to be Barking's improvement and development officer, one Sandy Hamberger.

Players had to answer pub quiz-type questions from the Burger Queen and perform bizarre stunts, including that old bedouin party trick, playing air guitar. The winning team happened to include both "Club Class" himself and his sidekick, policy officer John Tatam, two of the greatest exponents of management bullshit in the land (*Eye* 1061). What a team!

OFF THEIR TROLLEY

DOWN in Skidrow-on-Sea, Brighton and Hove council seems curiously eager to satisfy Tesco's every whim. In defiance of its own conservation department and English Heritage, B&H has gone ahead with the demolition of listed buildings and walls adjacent to the Hove conservation area to make room for an unnecessary off-the-peg, steel-and-glass supermarket.

Fine trees have been felled and a school has been moved and given a smaller playing-field so that, right next to those young lungs, a 320-space car-park can be laid over a former graveyard, adding to the congestion of the residential area's already busy roads. A full environmental assessment was not carried out, even though the scheme also involves decontamination of a heavily-polluted gas-works site.

Meanwhile, other local traders will lose the modest car-park upon which they have depended for decades – among them, the Co-op, financial supporter of several local councillors who are now in thrall to Tesco. But what can one expect of a "city" whose planning department is officially, and by a big margin, the worst-performing in the UK? With ideas above its station – monorails, seafront malls and towers – it keeps falling foul of regulatory authority. No wonder no one any good wants to work there.

● **BATH'S "Spa Care Line"**, a helpline for local people which gives 24-hour advice on a variety of subjects such as noisy neighbours, homelessness, disability and mental health, is on the brink of closure because it will lose Bath and North-east Somerset council some £161,000 this year. No one saw the huge loss coming, Lib Dem executive councillor Steve Hedges told the local press – except a student on work experience with the council over the summer. Cllr Hedges said he couldn't recall if the workie was an undergraduate or sixth-former. Good job someone was awake, though, isn't it?

HEALTH WARNING

VISITORS to North Wales should perhaps be issued with a health warning in the aftermath of the employment tribunal victory of former internal auditor Andy Sutton over Flintshire county council (*Eyes passim*).

FCC had victimised and constructively dismissed the auditor, the tribunal found, simply for trying to do his job. It now appears that there is something nasty and contagious going around in the county. Six of the main players in cases where Sutton's investigations were blocked by chief executive Philip McGreedy and chief legal officer Andrew Loveridge have been struck down by illness in the prime of life.

In the case of the unauthorised payment of £20,000 to the former manager of an old folks' home (*Eyes passim*), director of social services Jonathan Bacon and personnel director Jeanette Antrobus were both granted ill health retirement, big pay-offs and pensions. In the case of River Lane farm, a bodged property transfer (*Eye* 1021), former property services chief Paul Kent was granted ill health retirement, a big pay-off and pension. In the North Wales child abuse inquiry case, in which clerical officer Sian Griffiths (*Eyes passim*) received some £48,000 in unauthorised overtime payments, Ms Griffiths was granted, er, ill health retirement, a big pay-off and pension!

Following a major housing benefit fraud, Mike Kermode, the assistant director responsible for benefits (although not the fraud) was granted ill health retirement, a big pay-off and a pension. The benefits manager, Pat Wilbraham, was also given... you guessed it. Whatever could have suddenly struck down all these hale and hearty folk? Perhaps there is something unhealthy in the North Wales air!

● **FORMER Tory councillor Louise Borrows failed to convince Doncaster magistrates that she was acting in self-defence when she was found guilty of attacking three children with a whip after a window in her house had been smashed. A 13-year-old boy was left with bruising to his left leg after being hit three times; a nine-year old boy was hit twice; and a 12-year-old girl was slapped as she attempted to ride off on her bicycle. The magistrates gave Borrows a six-month community rehabilitation order and ordered her to pay compensation of £75 each to both boys, plus costs of £300.**

Unabashed, Borrows – who was accompanied by her partner, Labour councillor Keith Coulton – announced that she supports government policy on anti-social behaviour and has applied to join Doncaster Labour party. With a criminal record and the brass neck of a giraffe, she should fit in well.

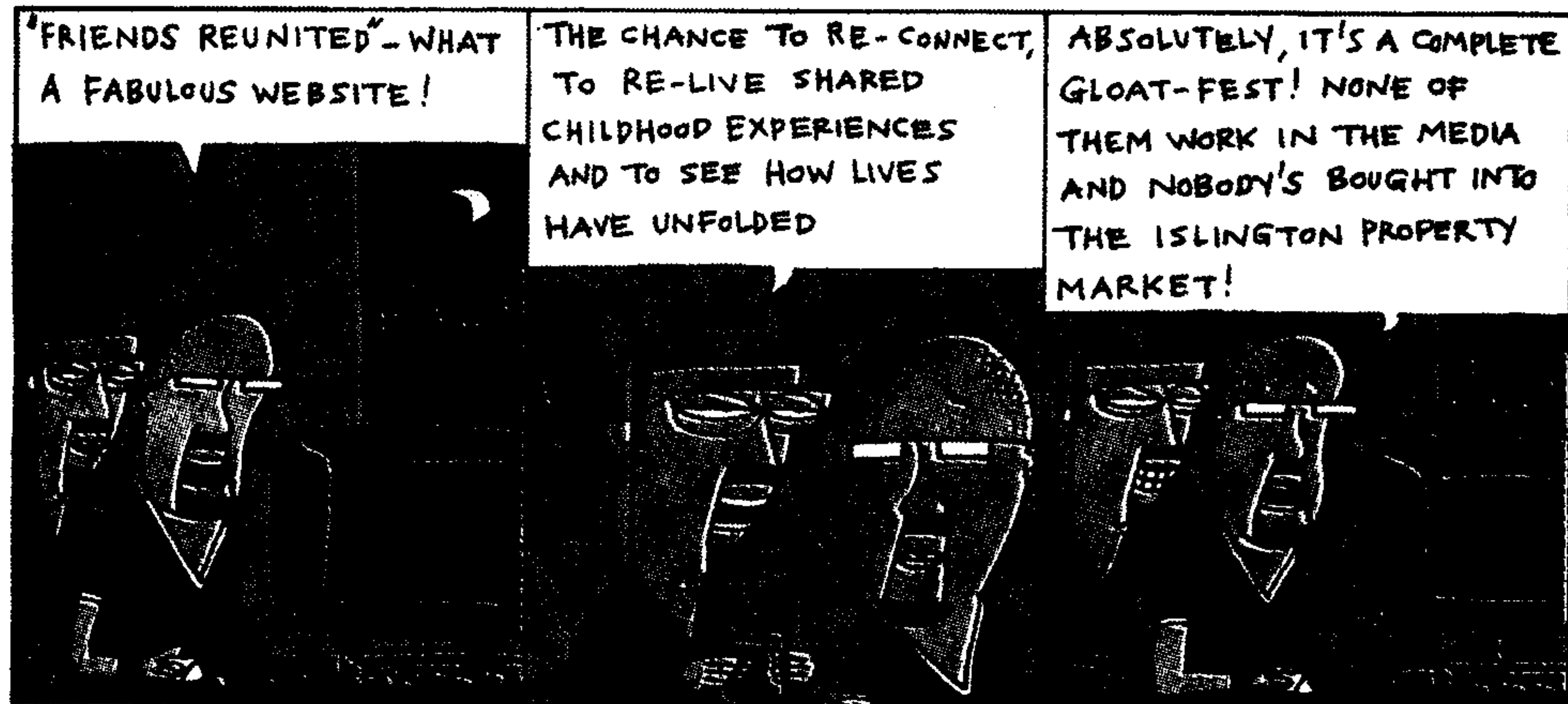
A pat on the back to the council.

Whenever we go to Ramsgate the toilets are clean, and the seats are just right for viewing the sea and wonderful harbour.

Isle of Thanet Gazette

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER



ROGUE NAIL

SOMETIMES local government and local newspapers get their wires badly crossed – as when the *Matlock Mercury* reported a recent Bakewell town council meeting which discussed vandalism at a park's cricket pavilion.

Buried in the report was the following throwaway line: "Cllr Bill Kirkham said he was shocked to see three naked men in the children's play area when he took his grand-daughter there."

In fact, as the *Eye's* Bakewell correspondent points out: "What Cllr Kirkham actually said was that he was 'horrified to see three exposed nails' but the reporter thought he said 'three exposed males'." If that was what the reporter heard, one might have expected it to make the intro of the story – unless this sort of thing happens all the time in Bakewell, of course.

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE town of Rugby is known for a muddy ball game, Thomas Arnold, Rupert Brooke and an excessively hearty public school with stripey brick buildings by Butterfield. Soon, however, if our environmentally-conscious government has its way, it could give its name to another big airport. Lucky Rugby.

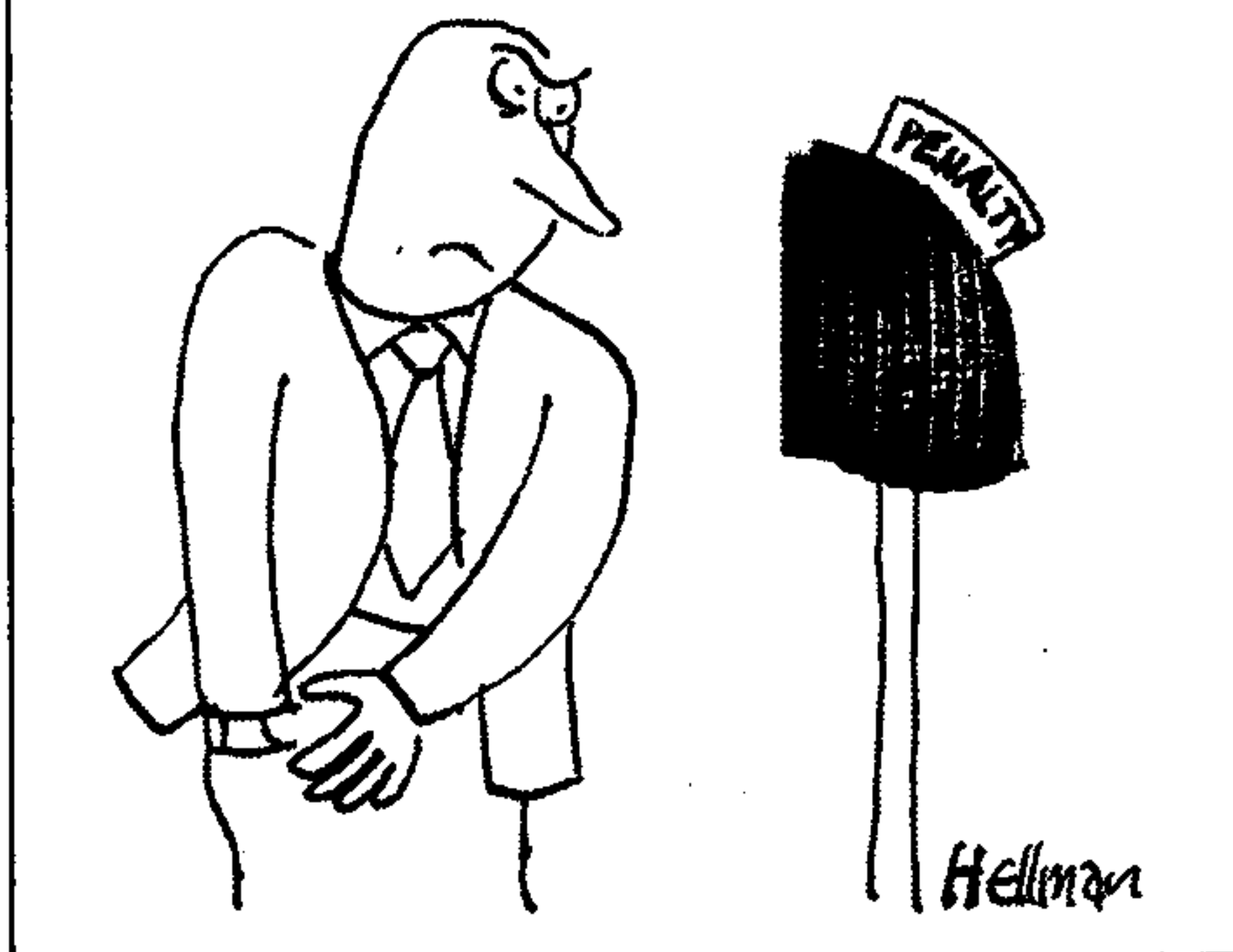
In *Eye* 1060 I discussed the department of transport's plans either to enlarge Stansted or build a huge new airport in north Kent in addition to enlarging Heathrow. The third option has received rather less attention: to build an international airport the size of Heathrow in open country between Rugby and Coventry.

It will handle 66 million passengers a year; and to facilitate this the existing Birmingham International Airport will be closed, even though it is convenient for road and rail travellers, has been there since the 1930s and has recently had millions spent on modernising and enlarging it.

The thinking behind the proposed Rugby International Airport is brilliant. It will be just three miles from the centre of Rugby; it will necessitate the extinction of two villages – Church Lawford and Kings Newnham (the first with a decent Victorian church; the other with a medieval tower, a handsome Georgian mansion and Neolithic circular ditched structures nearby; it will require burying the main railway line to Birmingham and culverting two miles of the meandering River Avon – and, yes, the area is a flood plain.

The new airport will blight the Ryton Organic Gardens, home of the Henry Doubleday Research Association for organic gardening and the Heritage Seed Library, while on the southern fringe is Stretton on Dunsmore with the 29th Division's

101 Uses for a City Hall Congestion Charge



Gallipoli Memorial and its avenue of lime trees. These will have to be chopped down.

Building a giant new airport anywhere causes havoc and misery, but why this particularly sensitive site was selected is known only to the experts at the department of transport. After four years' work, the plan was announced just before parliament went into recess. There was no consultation locally: incredibly, neither Rugby borough council nor the mayor of Rugby knew anything about it. Such is our government's respect for the democratic process and transparency in big planning decisions.

As I have observed before, Blair & Co are besotted with the aeroplane and keen to promote it at the expense of other forms of public transport

within our small island. In thinking that national pride demands more and bigger airports, are they so different from the squalid African dictators who impoverish their countries to buy luxury jets for themselves?

Perhaps a new giant airport at Rugby has been proposed simply because the alternatives seem more sensible and less damaging in comparison. But do we really need any new airports?

ON THE opposite side of Rugby International Airport is Coventry, where the dean and chapter of the cathedral hope to build an office block – for its own use – 50 yards from Sir Basil Spence's celebrated masterpiece. This will require the demolition of some of the few old buildings in the city centre which survived the Blitz in 1941: ordinary but decent brick 19th century structures in Hill Top, a cobbled street.

Perhaps the proposed replacement designed by Martin Smart of Acanthus Clews architects will be a work of genius; perhaps not. It is hard to say: the planning application was lodged very discreetly, the Fabric Committee for the Cathedral was never consulted and English Heritage has chosen not to comment.

Does this matter? It does. The setting of any cathedral deserves careful consideration and respect. Spence's Coventry Cathedral may be a product of one of the less inspiring periods in the history of British architecture, but the replacement of the bombed cathedral – cleverly retaining its ruins – was of immense national, polemical significance, and the result is a brilliant compromise between tradition and modernity. And after all – Milords Rogers and Foster take note – Coventry Cathedral is the last modern building ordinary people actually queued to see when it opened in 1962.

'Piloti'

Curse of Gnome

IN 1994 high profile Merseyside solicitor Kevin Dooley won hefty libel damages from Lord Gnome over an article in *Eye* 844 about his involvement in a planning application.



It is with immense sadness, therefore, that we report how Mr Dooley was last week found guilty of dishonesty and conduct unbefitting a solicitor and was unceremoniously struck off by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

The tribunal heard that between 1995 and 2000 he took part in 19 fraudulent investment schemes involving many millions of pounds with John Silver, currently serving a prison sentence for theft. Wealthy clients, including footballers Robbie Fowler and Stan Collymore, were promised extravagantly high returns on investments but ended up losing hundreds of thousands instead. By contrast, in one deal alone Dooley's fee was said to have been £1m.

The tribunal heard that conversations between Dooley and Silver bugged by the police were "more akin to Fagin and the Artful Dodger" than

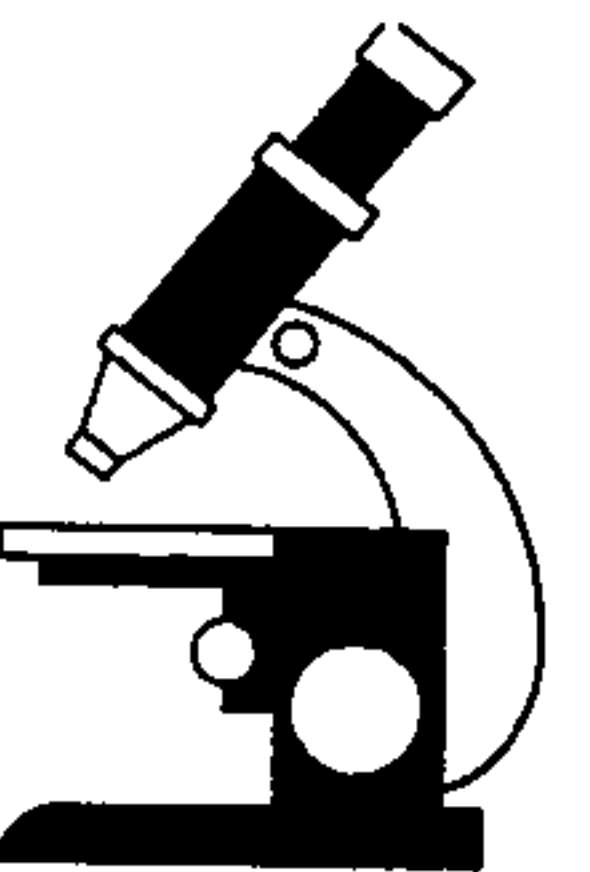
what one might expect to hear in a solicitor's practice. Meanwhile, the crown prosecution service is considering a file on Dooley submitted following a police investigation into allegations of corruption on Merseyside (*Eye* 1055).

I-SPY Weybridge, Surrey



Submitted by John Barker. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE



IRAQ's Saddam Hussein, we are told, is "only months" away from producing a nuclear weapon. All he needs is a sufficient quantity of weapons-grade, highly-enriched Uranium-235 or Plutonium-239.

In that "all he needs" is the rub: Hussein doesn't have anything like this amount of nuclear material, nor is he likely to acquire it anytime soon.

Of course he could build a bomb if he did – but so could any competent engineering department at any university in the world. The simplest nuke is a "gun-type" nuclear fission device – basically a tube along which two sub-critical masses of uranium are smashed together using a small charge of gelignite or whatever.

Iraq has had the ability to do this for years, even decades. But getting hold of the 35-40kg of uranium or 7kg of plutonium (which does not work in a gun-type bomb but only in the much more complicated implosion bomb, in which the nuclear material needs to be compressed using specially shaped and focused explosive charges) is extremely difficult.

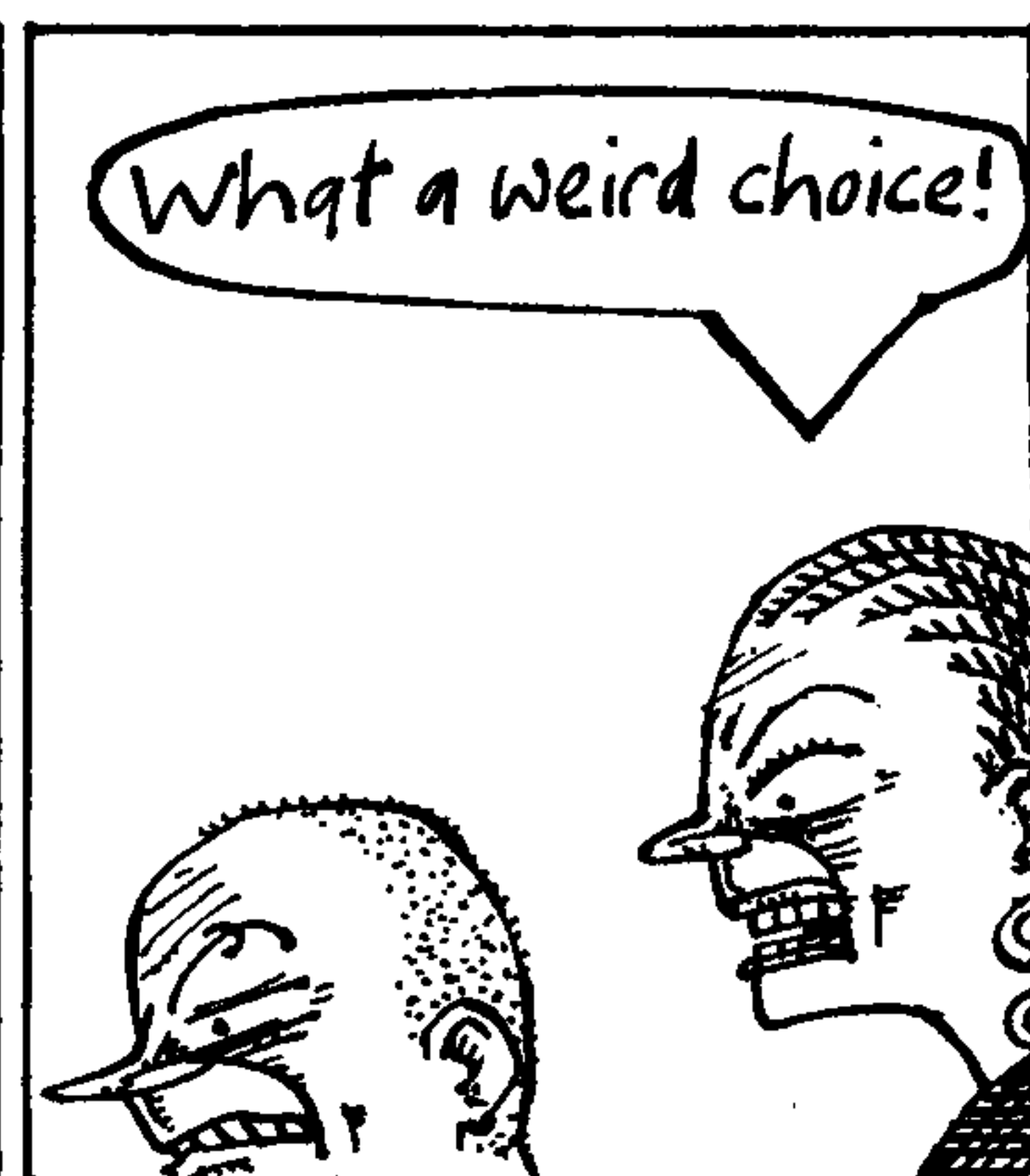
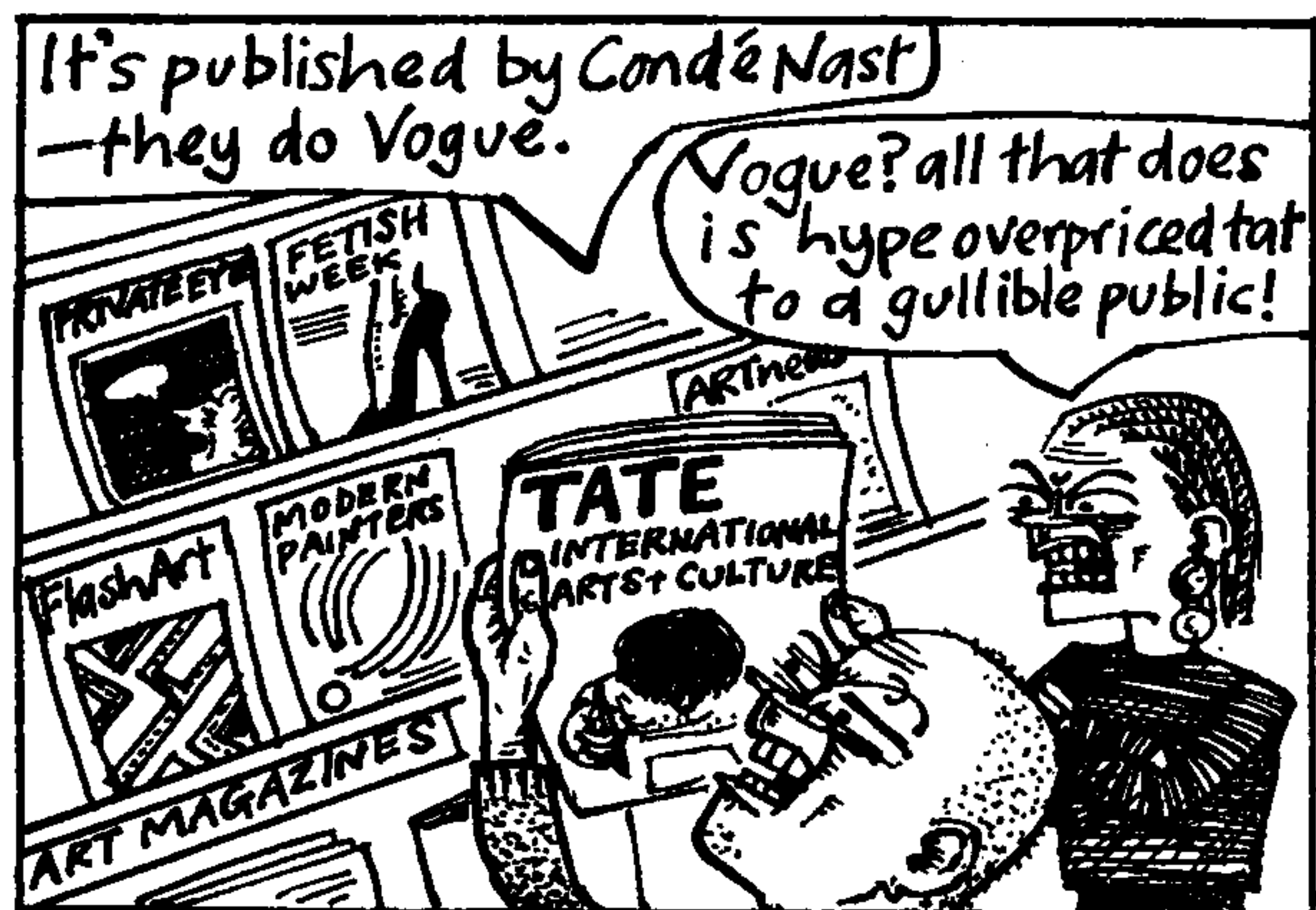
Iraq does not have the capacity to manufacture such a quantity of this material. It used to, but the Israelis flattened the Osirak reactor in 1981. It is possible that Iraq has got hold of some uranium via a rogue boffin from the old Soviet Union. But while it is easy to imagine a few kilos of uranium being smuggled out of Kazakstan or wherever; a third of a tonne of the stuff (the amount needed for a credible weapons programme) is almost inconceivable.

This doesn't mean Hussein may not have any number of biological or chemical nasties up his sleeve, but when it comes to getting the battle juices flowing, nothing works like the (bogus) threat of a nuke.

'Boffin'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



DOWN ON THE FARM



CIVIL servants at Defra, the department for environment, food and rural affairs, and its associated agencies are in a sweat over the possibility that bovines, not badgers, might be the major source of bovine tuberculosis (TB).

This is awkward because government is spending more than £35m on a badger culling experiment which, already two years late and overspent, consumes most of the TB research budget. Professor John Bourne, who heads the experiment, has fought with badger-obsessed career vets in Defra to secure a wider range of cattle-focused research. (In May he told the government's TB Forum that much of Defra's obsession with badgers was "dogma".)

Bourne still thinks the badger culling experiment important. He is sure badgers play a role in spreading the disease although to the extent cannot yet be quantified. But a new analysis of existing data commissioned by Bourne, due out soon, is expected to show that cattle have been a far more important source of the disease than previously thought.

This is worrying for the Woodchester Park research facility in Gloucestershire. Set up in 1976 to study TB in badgers, it has failed to prove that badgers infect cattle or to discover anything of use to farmers who want to end the disease. But on 27 June Woodchester Park's researchers did announce that they had video evidence of badgers trundling into barns to eat cattle feed at night, a-peeing and a-pooing as they went. If badgers give TB to cattle, they said, this could be the source.

The results did not surprise farmers or conservationists, who have known for years that badgers enter barns to steal food. But the Royal Society felt the research presented such "significant advances of broad interest", it rushed the study through its "fast-track" system and spun the story to the press.

"Scientists believe they have discovered how cattle catch tuberculosis from badgers," Radio 4's *Today* programme announced. The scientists had discovered no such thing. The BBC had to apologise for the cock-up; but it had in fact been duped. The researchers had cited another study apparently confirming that badgers transmit bovine TB to cattle, even though "the precise route of infection has yet to be identified".

The research cited was that of the *Eye*'s old friend Prof Sir John Krebs, a fellow of the Royal Society and chairman of the Food Standards Agency. In 1997 Krebs published what MAFF called a "comprehensive review" of bovine TB and called for the badger culling experiment. But far from being comprehensive, Krebs totally ignored cattle-to-cattle transmission of the disease. So with Krebs' reputation also on the line, how helpful that Woodchester Park and the Royal Society should put the badger back in the frame.

The timing was impeccable. Woodchester Park is a division of the Central Science Laboratory, which currently receives more than £4.1m in government funding focused entirely on badgers. Krebs, in his 1997 report, pointed out that the risk of humans catching bovine TB was just 1 in 2,000,000 compared to a 1 in 600 risk of getting food poisoning. Yet CSL categorises its badger work under its "public health" objective, not under its more appropriate objective of ensuring "that farmed animals... are protected by high welfare standards".

Despite his prominent position as chairman of the FSA, Prof Krebs has done nothing to expose the public health justification for his badger culling trial as a fallacy. Coincidentally, CSL's next biggest funding source, after Defra, is none other than Krebs' Food Standards Agency. In the same week that the badgers-in-barns research was spun out, who was the star speaker at a CSL conference on food safety? Prof Sir John Krebs.

'Gumboot'

Warballs

ONE YEAR ON

HATS OFF to Sun editor David Yelland for the least solipsistic piece about 11 September. His leader-page article on the anniversary was illustrated with a pisspoor amateur snapshot of a cluttered New York windowsill, with the World Trade Center just about visible in the distance. "For four years I lived just a few city blocks from the twin towers," he explained. "My wife and I made our first marital home in a tiny apartment in downtown Manhattan... The picture on this page was taken from our bedroom."

Other hacks interviewed ordinary New Yorkers, but the news page on BTOpenworld concentrated on what really mattered: "ENTERTAINMENT: Celebrities Recall 11 September." Teen magazine *Shout* also showed an admirable sense of proportion with the coverline for its issue of 6-19 September: "DRAMATIC TRUE-LIFE EXPERIENCES: 'I Was Terrified By The Twin Towers Tragedy'; 'I Lost My Luggage'."

"I'm doing my best to help you forget the horrible acts of 9/11 by taking off my clothes and dancing around naked in front of my webcam this Wednesday nite at 8pm PST. So turn off your televisions and tune into my live video chat and I promise to make you forget about all the troubles in the world today... Let's get it on, people!"

— Online stripper "Tiger Lily" does her bit for the war against terrorism.

Every morning the *Scotsman* emails registered subscribers with a summary of that day's top stories, plus a "Did You Know..." tailpiece. Last Wednesday's mail-out ended thus: "Did You Know... One year ago today, over 3000 people died when four airliners were hijacked. Two were deliberately crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York." Clearly, the dumbed-down Hootsmon (editor-in-chief: Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill) thinks it wise not to underestimate the ignorance and/or absent-mindedness of its few remaining readers.

"The terrorist atrocities of last 11 September in America had many unexpected ramifications for the world economy. Almost every sector has been affected and the legal market is no exception. One of the enduring effects has been a trend towards more mid- to senior-level Scottish lawyers rather than the usual junior lawyers opting to relocate to London, and it shows no sign of slowing down."

— Lara Paterson in *CA*, magazine of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland.

"The events of 11 September have had a huge impact on our lives," a press release from Ikea declares, reporting its survey of 1,000 people across the United States. Huge is indeed the word for its findings, which conclude with the following league tables: "Top 5 Rooms in the Home that Comfort People the Most Since 11 September: living room; family room/den; bedroom; kitchen; dining room. Top 10 Items in the Home that Comfort People the Most Since 11 September: pictures of family and friends; couch; entertainment center; bed; chair; candles; candlesticks; kitchen table; home office; plants; blanket." So now we know, thanks to Ikea's selfless research: since 11 September, Americans have not been comforted by their bathrooms.

"[Michael] Schumacher has an extra reason to succeed in Italy – it was at Monza in 2001 that he last failed to finish on the podium. But he admits that the distractions of 11 September meant that winning motor races was not high on his list of priorities. 'It was the reason why I was not on the

peak of performance,' added Schumacher, who finished fourth."

— BBC News website.

"Did you know that the game of rugby will be among those mourning the tragedy of 11 September 2001, a day which saw members of the rugby fraternity among those lost in the plane crashes in New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania?... As well as the human tragedy of those rugby players lost in the horrific events of that day, the rugby calendar was also shaped by the tragedy, with the Dubai Sevens stripped of its IRB World Sevens Series status, and the Australian Rugby League squad cutting short their tour to the UK."

— Planet Rugby website.

While millions mourned the people who died in the World Trade Center, the grief of *Mobile Radio Technology* magazine was focused on a far more tragic loss – the destruction of the antennas and arials on the WTC's roof. Richard Tell, a radio frequency expert, recalled his feelings on 11 September: "Losing the WTC sites was like losing a personal friend... To see the WTC come down along with its 351-foot antenna mast made me feel sick."

"The atrocities of last 11 September sent shockwaves through the normally robust fashion industry, coming as it did on the first day of New York fashion week. As a shocked and traumatised world began to pick up the pieces of life again, the fashion trade responded in the only way it knows how – with an intuitive flair for reflecting and shaping the mood of the nation."

— Launch issue of *Tiara*, "a brand new kind of bridal magazine for Wales".

The *Sunday Times* magazine marked the first anniversary with a "ground Zero Special Issue" containing "untold stories, unseen pictures". And, it forgot to add, unfortunate adverts between the pages of commemorative prose. A spread advertising Bryant Homes had the topical copyline "I was late for work today – traffic jam on the stairs". A few pages later was an ad for Ecco shoes, showing two men fleeing down a deserted city street. The copyline: "Who says humans can't fly?"

"The voluntary sector is getting together on the theme of 'The Environment – Where Do You Fit In?' in the Queen's Hall, Narberth, 11 September, all afternoon... Why hold this on 11 September? It was pure coincidence! The organisers had their heads buried in improving their communities and environment and forgot that other sorts of things happen in the world. But it was a significant coincidence. The speakers will emphasise the joined-upness of social, economic and environmental issues. Pembrokeshire can't regenerate one without the others, and in the same vein world trade towers and powers need to be reconstructed on this solid holistic foundation."

— Announcement from Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services.



Letters

Private Eye

Bush whacked

Sir,

Your correspondent M. Rose writes a curious note (1062) stating Dubya is "not evil". But for those of us who (unlike M. Rose) don't have the theological/philosophical wisdom to make such pronouncements of "good" or "evil" on those we haven't met (I presume M. Rose is not a personal good ole buddy of Dubya), may I dare to dredge up a fact or two?

When Dubya was Texas governor, his enthusiasm for capital punishment saw 135 people, many proclaiming their innocence, put to death. In some cases (see Amnesty International) evidence was less than solid, and quite a few of the convicted had less than average intelligence. "I like it the way it is," was apparently Bush's response when a law prohibiting execution of the mentally disadvantaged was defeated. On another occasion, this "not evil" man was photographed while mocking a woman on death row: "Please don't kill me," he joked. Interested readers will find a mountain of info on the net, may I recommend among other sites <http://www.texecutions.com> – I could go on about his cronyism, contempt for environmental issues and the war he so desperately wants...

SUZANNE KELLY,

London W2.

Acorn antiques?

Sir,

With reference to your Educashun Newz column (1062), "After the demise of rival operating systems from Acorn and RM..." Whoops! Although Acorn Computers Ltd themselves are no more, the Acorn operating system RISC OS is alive and well. A quick search on the internet would have revealed that the OS is owned by Pace Microtechnology and supplied to the desktop market by RISC OS Ltd. In addition you can still buy a brand new Acorn compatible machine from three different manufacturers.

AARON TIMBRELL (VirtualAcorn),

Via email.

Not buying it

Sir,

Regarding Microsoft's latest abusive gimmick (Educashun Newz, 1062): Britain's schools can avoid the new annually-renewable licence fees very easily by not upgrading.

Bill Gates's mad renewable licence policy applies only to his latest operating system, Windows XP, and accompanying software.

Older operating systems (Windows 2000, Windows 98, et al) are still available as a one-off, non-renewable purchase. In many schools they are probably already installed on equipment too old to run XP in any case. Just because a company comes out with a "new, improved" product doesn't mean we have to buy it!

ALEX COX,

Via email.



"These crop circles certainly make you wonder, don't they?"

Poetry in motion

Sir,

Shome mishtake shurely. Have all your sub-editors been on the summer hols, or am I the only one to notice the hilarious form of words used in your piece about the long-awaited report into irregularities at Lynde House?

Did you really mean to let this little gem of composition go out? "Eye readers will recall how residents were left for hours in their own waste; how they were left motionless for so long..." Or were you, like they, poor sods, caught between two stools?

Sincerely,
CLIVE BRICKELL,

Blandford Forum, Dorset.

Lookalike



Prince



Beavis

Sir,

Look. There is a clear resemblance between His Royal Highness Prince Harry and Beavis (cohort of Butthead). Is it too much to hope that they might be related?

God Save The Queen!

JIM RUSSELL,

Cambridge.

Skimmed milk

Sir,

Muckspreader's review of my film Milk Wars (1062) combined ignorance and arrogance to a degree rare even among those superannuated toffs that still lurk dyspeptically at the fringes of Private Eye.

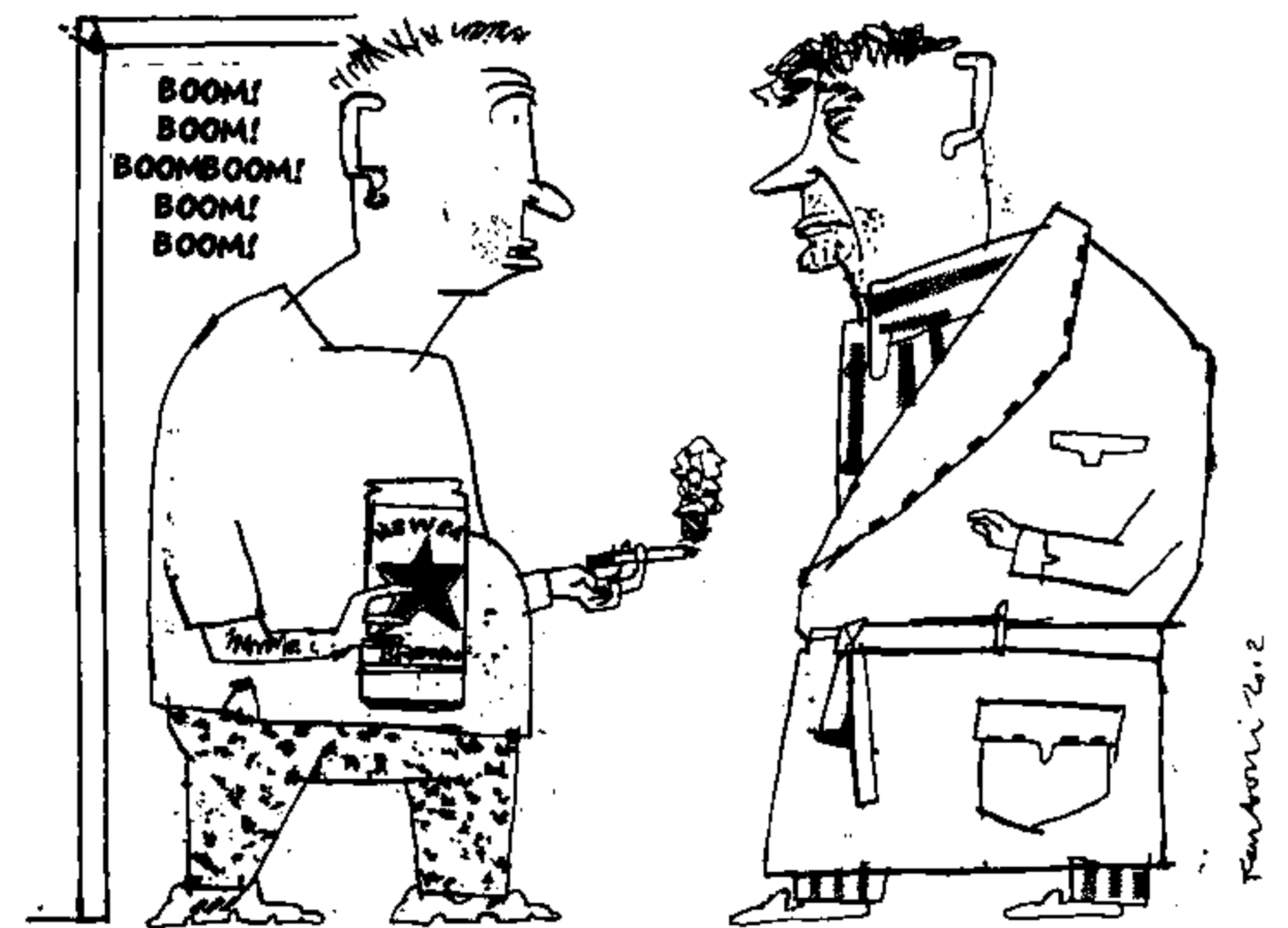
Muckspreader accuses me of ignoring the importance of the euro in setting the milk price, of blaming the supermarkets for most of the problem, of ignoring the role of Brussels and, by default, absolving the government of failing to react to the problems of dairy farmers. In fact, every one of these issues was specifically referred to in my commentary.

It is what follows that is truly staggering. In language of withering condescension he goes on to trash my journalism by claiming that I obviously did not know that a major reason for the plight of British dairy farmers was because "supermarkets can buy milk at giveaway prices from Ireland and the continent".

There's only one problem with this assertion: it is complete tosh. There is practically no raw milk imported from Europe – or anywhere else. In fact, in 2000, when the film was made, the opposite was more likely to be true: greater quantities of milk were travelling south from Northern to Southern Ireland than the other way. As regards the extent to which the supermarkets can affect the price of milk, it is true that the guide price is based on IMPI, the price set by Brussels for milk products such as cheese. However, it is only a guide. This is why, in the autumn of 2000, the major British supermarkets decided that IMPI was possibly no longer reliable. Fearing a possible milk shortage and under pressure from various lobby groups, they independently raised the price by 2 pence a litre.

Next time Muckspreader chooses to criticise somebody else's journalism, he would be better to choose a topic that less easily reveals his own bias

Scenes You Seldom See



"Music too loud? Sorry, mate – I'll turn it down immediately"

and disregard of the facts. In short, his view of the matter could hardly be more clouded if he had been upended in his own slurry pit. Muckspreader is well named: that's clearly what he does best. But then, with such abysmal levels of journalism, who needs muckspreaders.

CHRIS GOODARD,

Sharpshooter Films Ltd, London W12.

Sir,

What a load of almost complete cobblers (Down on the Farm, Milk Wars, Eye 1062). If Channel 4 make the reasonable assumption that their audience know nothing about the milk industry, it appears that Muckspreader feels the same about Eye readers.

Indeed, the supermarkets are the chief culprits in the UK, making retailer margins of over 20 percent on milk and well over 50 percent on bog standard Cheddar, three and four times continental margins. The supermarkets can lean on their suppliers because the dairy companies know they can chop the price of milk they pay the farmers any time they like, because the CAP intervention system does not work in the UK, because the operators of the system are the big dairy companies, notably Dairy Crest, who do not want the system to work. The only solution is for farmers to control the production of intervention products – to restore a floor to the market – which some of them are now trying to do. But will the UK competition authorities – who, two years ago, gave the greedy supermarkets a clean bill of health – permit them to do so?

It is complete rubbish to say the "main reason" for low milk prices in the UK are imports into the UK from Ireland and the continent. Virtually no milk is imported into the UK. French cheese exports to the UK are almost all branded and sell at a premium. The Irish have always exported a lot of their dairy products to the UK, and, far from undermining prices in the UK, they are also now suffering from them.

Of course, the biggest problem has been the strength of the £. But even accepting this, UK milk producer prices are obscenely low while prices in UK supermarkets are obscenely high.

BARRY WILSON,

Editor, Dairy Industry Newsletter, Annecy, France.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

What are you most looking forward to?
Proving that I'm far from the snob the nation thinks I am.

What will you miss the most?
Crudites from San Lorenzo or fish cakes from The Ivy – my favourite London restaurants.

— Tara Palmer Tomkinson on
'I'm A Celebrity...'. TV Times

Slow on the uptake

Sir,
After reading several letters (1062) condemning the Pied Piper joke, I looked at it again to see if I understood what the fuss was about. Was the indignation due to the joke being made during a period which, according to the tabloids, the country was in mourning for two young girls we never knew? Or was it the case that they thought the artist actually had Soham in mind?

I must be honest and admit that I am either very slow or very uncaring because I never got any of this when I first read the joke.

PS: May I be one of the first to register my disgust, cancel subscription, etc, etc, about the Florida Flying School joke. After I have stopped laughing.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL CARBERRY,

Oxfordshire.



A taxing read

Sir,
Re the article describing Bermuda as a "blatant tax haven" and some rich people as "notorious tax avoiders" (Eye 1061). Page 33: a full-page advertisement offering to "reduce your exposure" to tax from a company with offices in a number of tax havens, some of which I expect are blatant. Next time the compiler of "just fancy that" is short of examples of self-contradictory journalism, he or she might want to look closer to home.

Keep up the good work,
TONY BRENNAN,

Via email.

The pace bowler still hopes, however, to make the Ashes tour. "I want to play badly," he said.

Daily Telegraph

KP nuts

Sir,
Re: Rake's Progress, Eye 1062. I am glad that you have noticed KPMG's commitment in driving quality and integrity in its worldwide member firms – and the aim of the International Chairman Mike Rake to restore credibility to the accounting profession. That same drive for integrity means that we continue to stand behind our audit work and engagement teams regarding our former client, Xerox Corporation.

KPMG LLP (US) remains firm in its conviction that the financial statements reported on by us in May 2001, including Xerox's financial statements for 2000 and the re-stated financial statements for 1997-1999, were fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

KPMG, Xerox and PricewaterhouseCoopers had it right the first time, when the company and three separate teams from PwC all agreed with us that Xerox's lease accounting methodology was GAAP compliant.

Xerox's restated financial statements defy economic reality. They apparently give Xerox the benefit of recognising revenues in 2002 – and in future years – that it had already recognised in prior years. This serves neither the interests of the investing public, or restore confidence in the capital markets.

So, your apparent surprise at the appointment of Bob Alsbaugh (who was not part of the Xerox engagement team) from KPMG's US firm, as KPMG's worldwide Chief Executive, is wholly misplaced.

Yours sincerely,
GAVIN HOULGATE,

Head of Corporate Communications,
KPMG LLP (UK).

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Football's like a big market place, and people go to the market every day to buy their vegetables..."

SIR BOBBY ROBSON, Channel 5 News
(Richard Parnell)

"Coming next – the music you'd like to hear at your funeral."

ANDY ARCHER, BBC Radio Norfolk
(David Cuffley)

"I'm not worried about the weekend, I'm worried about Saturday."

PETE SAMPRAS, BBC Online
(Martin Witteveen)

"You could call it a complicated game of bluff. Except that it's not a game. And they're not bluffing."

ANDREW MARR, BBC News
(Andrew Smith)

"Israel's population has grown by over 20% in the last ten years. Meanwhile, the Palestinian population is exploding."

ALAN JOHNSTONE, BBC World Service
(Tim Budds)

THE EARLY YEARS : KATE MOSS



Safety last

Sir,

Sorry, but Backbiter (1062) is a tad late. Jarvis workers went back to school in Huddersfield earlier this year and, as a result, some 1,450 schoolkids at Colne Valley High School haven't. Their summer holiday has been extended by a week – the school isn't safe, because Jarvis have cocked up another PFI. And guess who much help and support has been offered to the parents – many of whom have had to make special care arrangements for their children for the week.

CHAS BURNETT,

Via email.

Out of tune

Sir,

Re the lady who is a regular at the ENO and doesn't like what she sees. I think the past few years have been pretty good, with perhaps one complete turkey per season and most of the rest entertaining or moving, and often both, and normally also well sung. So I have a good reason to keep buying tickets. Why does she keep going if she doesn't like it? It's not compulsory.

By the way, it wasn't much use her giving Anthony Payne a bollocking about the quality of the ENO's productions. He's the composer who recreated Elgar's Third Symphony and is blameless for sins at the Coliseum. The person she doesn't like is Nicholas Payne.

Regards,
HELEN ELSOM,

Cambridge.

Sir,

The whole point about Nicholas Payne is that he is highly regarded by those who work with him.

I cannot believe that the author of such a humourless letter could possibly be a reader of your esteemed organ. Was it a spoof?

Yours sincerely,
LOUISE McCULLOUGH,

London SW1.

PS: Are "Anthony" Payne and Nicholas Payne in any way related?

Lavatory humour

Sir,

Following Mike Crapper's letter (Eye 1062), contrary to popular belief, the flushing toilet was in fact invented by Thomas Twyford.

Mercifully, however, the first flushing loos were marketed very successfully by his contemporary and fierce competitor Thomas Crapper.

Otherwise, these days, my name would be shit.

Sincerely,
ALAN TWYFORD,

St Ives, Cornwall.

HOM SAP

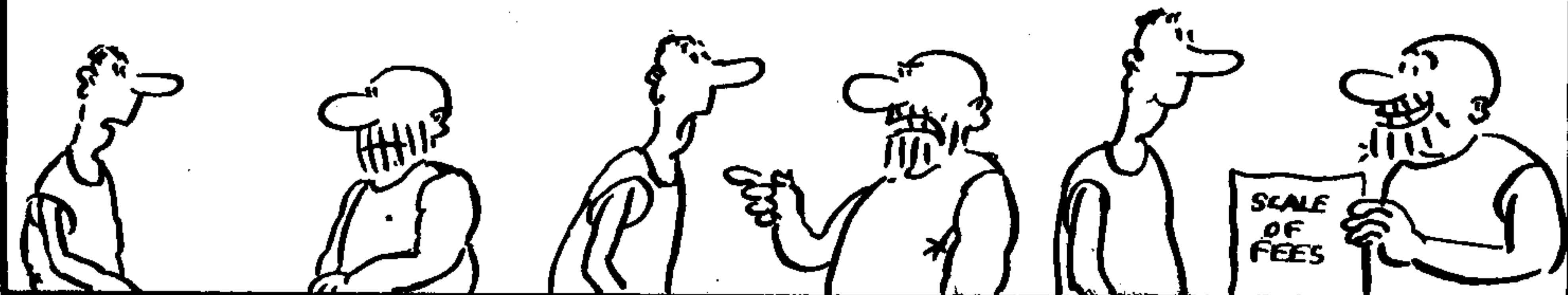


AUSTIN

WHAT'S THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN JUSTICE AND LAW?

JUSTICE IS WHEN YOU GET WHAT YOU DESERVE.

LAW IS WHEN YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR.



Letter from Manila from Our Own Correspondent

WHENEVER some of our less-educated citizens see a white man – and sometimes when they see a black man – they say: “Hi, Joel!” because in generations past, most foreigners we Filipinos saw were American soldiers.



It is not that we particularly like our former colonial masters. It is because we imagine that every GI has wads of dollars in his pocket we can help spend. Our American masters gave us democracy. And as a democratic country, the Philippines is playing its part in the War against Terrorism. We stand to make wads of dollars out of it too.

Like America we are a mainly Christian nation. But for years we have had a little local difficulty with Muslims in the deep south. In the 1980s, a score of them went to Afghanistan where they were trained to fight the Russians by Osama bin Laden. When they came home, they formed a gang called the Abu Sayyaf. But they did not waste their time on suicide bombings or hijackings in the name of Islam. They went into one of our only growth industries – kidnapping for ransom – and made (literally) a killing.

The Abu Sayyaf chop the heads of those who cannot pay – that is, poor Filipino Christians – and also chop the heads of those who can but won't pay – those foreigners, especially Americans, who should have wads of dollars in their pockets.

Our government, under President Gloria Arroyo, used to describe Abu Sayyaf as bandits. But after 11 September she began calling them terrorists. Lo and behold, within months she had \$100m in American aid to play with, and hundreds of American soldiers were slouching around the Abu Sayyaf-infested south, calling it the “second front” in the War against Terrorism.

The Americans were not here to fight but to teach Filipino soldiers to fight. We are proud of our professional armed forces, who have a soldierly dislike of fighting. Our boys are not scared of the Abu Sayyaf, but they are reluctant to go into the jungle, especially at night, because it is full of evil spirits, which are really scary. So the army's tactic for rescuing Abu Sayyaf hostages is to plaster the jungle where the kidnappers are thought to be with artillery and rocket fire and then see who is left alive.

The American instructors provided night-vision goggles to cure our boys' jungle fright, then began training them to shoot straight. Our rifles, they found, were often older than the soldiers carrying them, and the barrels were worn out. New rifles made all the difference. When the army tried to rescue two American Christian missionaries held by the Abu Sayyaf, there was an almighty gun battle and both hostages were hit. Only one survived.

The Americans offered a reward of \$1m for each of the Abu Sayyaf's five chieftains, dead or alive. This got our soldiers going. They say they killed one of the five, Abu Sabaya, in a gunfight. The armed forces captured the sunglasses Sabaya wore to hide his piggy eyes, and the satellite phone he used to call local radio stations to boast about Abu Sayyaf's latest beheadings. But they never found Sabaya's body. So the reward is still on offer.

This was enough for our president to declare that the Abu Sayyaf were all but defeated. The American soldiers went home. No sooner had they gone, than the Abu Sayyaf kidnapped six Jehovah's Witnesses and decapitated two of them. The army's response was to spare Mrs Arroyo's blushes by denying that the kidnappers were the Abu Sayyaf. The perpetrators were simple, drug-crazed bandits. So the army began plastering the jungle with artillery and rocket fire. Never mind: the Americans will be back next month with more training schemes and another \$55m in aid.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● “I never imagined I would end up making pubic wigs for a living,” Hideo Tsuda told visitors to his Poweru hairpiece factory in Matsuyamachi, Osaka, “and in my early years, I made toupees, like everyone else. But one of my customers asked me help his teenage daughter who was worried about a lack of hair down below. I studied the problem, saw that it was a common concern, and business took off from there. I have never looked back”.

Tsuda was explaining how he had become Japan's leading manufacturer of customised merkins, selling more than 5,000 hand-made “moa moa” (genital hairpieces) over the past three decades. “In Europe during the Middle Ages, pubic wigs were used to hide syphilis sores, but the demand in Japan is very different, and is tied to our hot spring culture. You have to be naked to enter the communal baths, so if you go in a group, your friends see everything. Many people feel embarrassed if they have less than the amount of hair that is considered normal, so they come to me.

“Each moa moa is individually-cut and hand-sewn, with thousands of hairs individually stitched to a polythene skin-substitute. They range in price from 40,000 to 50,000 yen, and I'm told by my customers that they don't come off, not in the hot springs, nor even in the middle of sex. For many years, my clientele used to be entirely female, but in recent years men have started to buy them too. The biggest growth area has been in dyed pubic hairpieces for older men, because they make them look younger. Business has never been better, but I am approaching retirement age, and I don't know what will happen to the factory, because this is a specialised art that takes years to learn. I had hoped that my son would want to take over, but for some reason he doesn't seem very keen.”

(South China Morning Post, 15/8/02. Spotter: Will Hulbert)

● “Condoms are all very well,” Senator Mechai Viravaidya told a meeting of Thailand's Health department in Bangkok, “but they are expensive, and couples do not always have access to them at the vital moment, especially in rural areas. However, lemon juice is highly effective as a contraceptive, and everyone always has a lemon

within easy reach, even the poor. Which is why I believe we should mount a government advertising campaign, encouraging women to put a slice of lemon into their vaginas before sex, as a cheap and effective form of birth control.”

Senator Viravaidya pointed out that lemons have long been used as contraceptives in Thailand, but government scientists remained sceptical. “It's true that lemon juice has a high level of citric acid and a low ph level,” Dr Pakdi Posiri noted, “but that doesn't make it a reliable spermicide. What worries me is that a lot of people may try the method and end up getting pregnant, or catching venereal diseases. And think of how much lemon juice can sting and irritate, even on the hands, let alone on more sensitive parts. In any case, are couples really going to stop half-way through sex and say, ‘oh dear, did we forget the lemon’? And as for this being a traditional and reliable form of contraception, may I remind the senator that the population of Thailand is over sixty million, so while it may be traditional, it doesn't seem to be all that reliable.”

(Bangkok Post, 8/8/02. Spotter: Santa Claus)

● “You may call it superstition, but just look at the results,” local government official Rajesh Kumar Mahoto told reporters in the far western Banke district of Nepal. “The rains had not come, and the villagers urgently needed to appease Indra, the God of rain, so they could plant rice. So the women, all two hundred of them,



locked their husbands in their homes, then stripped naked and ploughed the fields at midnight. After that, some of them also married frogs, and staged naked dances. And next day the rains came. Coincidence? I don't think so.

“In fact, if anything, the ritual worked too well. We had 197 millimetres of rain over the weekend, which led to flooding in some areas, causing landslides and some deaths. Next year, we may have to leave out the frogs.”

(Nepal Samacharpatra, 15/8/02. Spotter: Mark Littlewood)

BY MIKE BARFIELD		THE APPLIANCE GUIDE TO FICTION: WOMEN'S	
a p p a r e n t l y			
		JOANNA TROLLOPE	CATHERINE COOKSON
		J.K. ROWLING	ANY CHICK LIT AUTHOR

NOW IT'S A NASTY COUGH!

by Our Political Staff **Meg O'Zone**

THE LEADER of the Conservative Party, Mr Iain Duncan Cough, has at last broken his long silence by launching an astonishing personal attack on the prime minister, Mr Tony Blair.

In one of the most outspoken broadsides in parliamentary history, Mr Cough accused Mr Blair of being "absolutely right" in his support for President Bush's plans to attack Saddam Hussein.

Cough lashed out, "Mr Blair has shown great personal courage in

backing this war, but he has not gone nearly far enough.

Respiratory Complaint

"My opinion, for what it's worth, is that we should do everything President Bush and Mr Blair suggest, but also quite a lot more."

When he was pressed by reporters to be more specific he quickly silenced them by reverting to his earlier policy of saying nothing at all.

Mr Duncan Cough is hopeless (*Surely '47'? Ed.*).

AMERICANS AND SAUDIS MAKE FRIENDS



NURSERY TIMES

Friday September 20 2002



DID COW REALLY JUMP OVER MOON?

by Our Astronomy Staff **Phil Space**

THE WORLD of Nursery Rhymes was rocked last night when it was claimed that the famous cow moon jump never took place.

Disbelievers are now claiming that the whole thing was a hoax designed to get one up on the Jumblies and their record-breaking, round-the-world sieve voyage.

Said one sceptic, "The pictures of the cow sailing over the moon are obviously faked. The way the light from the moon is shining on the cow proves that no jump ever took place."

The furious jump veteran,

Mr Buzz Moo, 79, hit out at his critics and felled them with his hoof.

Lunacy

"This makes me mad," he said. "My mission to the moon was witnessed by a laughing little dog and a fiddle-playing cat. What more proof do you need?"

Neither dog nor cat, however, were yesterday available for comment.

LATE NEWS

□ Dish and spoon to split

□ Dish insists that his sperm is destroyed. Full story "Me and My Spoon" 94



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Howdy!

And a very sombre "hullo" it is too, as we are all still trying to come to terms with the trauma of our recent commemorative service for the tragic events of 9/11.

Many of you in the parish, I know, will find it hard to forget the anguish of sitting there, hour upon hour, watching these events being repeated on the television.

But, you know, there comes a time when you have to draw a line in the sand and move on.

And what better way to move on from this particular tragedy than to stand firm with our good friend the Rev. Dubya Bush, in his crusade to rid the world of evil.

I've heard a lot of people around the parish bad-mouthing this inspirational preacher, whom we are so fortunate to have as a friend and supporter.

To hear some people talk, you'd think that the Rev. Dubya was an idiot and a buffoon, a kind of Homer Simpson-figure from that popular TV show that Mr Campbell tells me is one of my favourite programmes.

But nothing could be further from the truth. I was recently privileged to be allowed to spend some time with him at his Texas retreat, Camp Dubya, and I have to say that it was one of the most uplifting spiritual experiences of my life!

I have never met a more intelligent, perceptive, well-informed and wise observer of our human condition, and a lot of what he says is so deep that you cannot understand it when you first hear it.

We had a prayer session round the campfire when we took as our text the great words of St John of Wayne, "a man hath got to do what a man hath got to do".

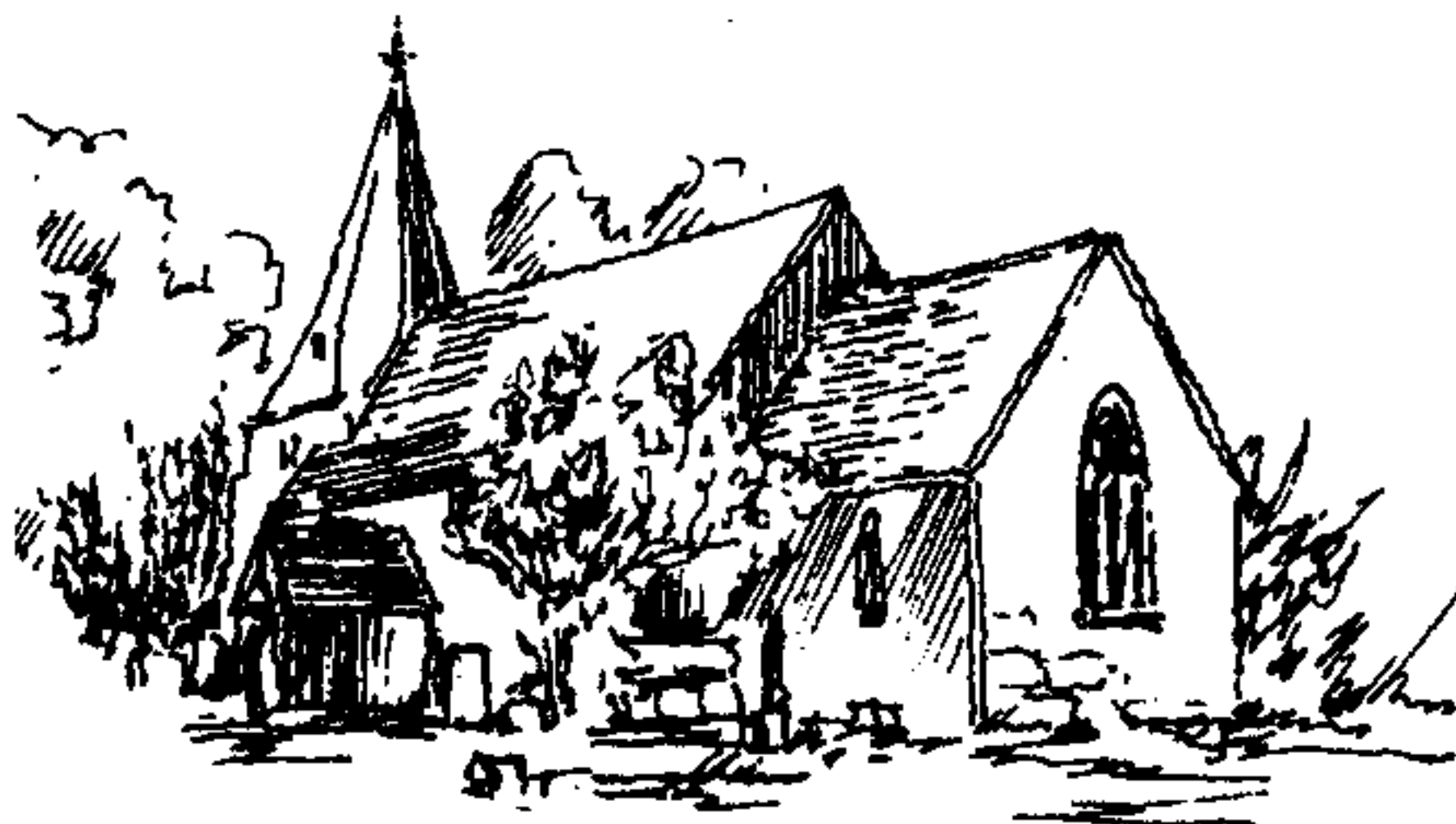
And I've really drawn tremendous strength from these comforting words, particularly when I came back home to find that in my absence almost everybody in the parish had turned against me, and were voicing all kinds of doubts and worries about where I was taking the parish.

Do you remember that bit in "High Noon" where the sheriff is trying to get the townsfolk to back him in resisting the war of terror that is about to be unleashed on their town by the moustachioed gunman with his weapons of mass-destruction?

You will remember that everyone abandoned him, because they were scared.

Well, that's what it feels like round here at the moment. But will I give up? No, because I know I'm right! It's a lonely job, wearing the vicar's badge.

But when the bad guys are out there, ready to do their worst, there is only one



place for anyone who believes in the difference between right and wrong – waiting at that station, as the clock ticks round to 12 noon!

Isn't that one of the most moving scenes in scriptures? And shouldn't it be our guiding light in the dark months and years that lie ahead? And when this great crusade is finally won, what will we think then of all those members of the parish who remained quaking in their pews, when Gary Blair called them to their duty?!

I am not thinking of anyone in particular. So don't worry, Mr Brown, Mr Cook or Mrs Short, I'm not going to embarrass you!

But when next Sunday comes, I hope you'll all be joining in the new chorus I've written for Evensong, after watching "High Noon" a number of times in the private cinema of the Rev. Bush's ranch-style rectory.

"Do not forsake me, oh my Parish, etc"
© Words and music, Rev. T. Blair.

Yours,

Tony



To Remember In Your Prayers

...my poor father-in-law Mr Tony Booze who has just, with singular ill-judgement, published a book entitled *Behind The Scenes In The Vicarage: Cherie's Dad Tells It Like It Is*. Let us pray that no parishioner is foolish enough to buy this sad pack of alcohol-induced hallucinations and that Mr Booze himself may pass away peacefully in his sleep rather than bring further shame and embarrassment on his poor daughter. T.B.

Good News Corner!



IT'S OFFICIAL! Crime in the parish has dropped to vanishing point, exactly as the Vicar promised a year ago. Some unhelpful, elderly parishioners have told Mr Blunkett that all their houses have been burgled this week – but that's not **street crime** and that's the only type of crime the Vicar was talking about. So stop moaning and start celebrating!

Mr Blunkett, Chair of the Neighbourhood Watch

THE CHANGING FACE OF EVIL

A Homily From The Rev. Dubya Bush, of the Church of The Magnificent Seven Day Adventists



Howdy, partners, over there in li'l old Grand Britain. Courtesy of our minister, the Rev. Tommy Blower, let me say a few words about our enemy, the Evil One. Do not be fooled into thinking you know what he looks like! You do not! For the Evil One is full of guile! Yes, sir, he is! He's always changing his appearance! One minute, he has a long beard and lives in a cave. The next he has a moustache and lives in Baghdad. But underneath, we know that he is always the same Beelzebub as he ever was. As I was telling your Rev. Blower at our Bar B.Q. at the W. Ranch, the only way to deal with an Apache is to nuke him.



Parish Postbag

Dear Sir,

As people who sat through the Vicar's recent talk to the Working Men's Club, we would like to protest in the strongest possible terms about what a sickening load of bellicose

Yours faithfully,

B. Crow, M. Ricks, D. Spart and others,
The Working Men's Club,
Vic Feather Street.

The Editor reserves the right to cut letters for reasons of space. A.C.

An Occasional Series My Favourite Meal

No.1 The Vicar

I like a lot of different types of meal from all the ethnic communities that make up our vibrantly multi-cultural parish. My ideal meal would probably begin with Prawn Crackers from Wendy Deng's Chinese takeaway in the High Street, followed by Chicken Tikka Massala from The Star of Hinduja, and then traditional British fish and chips from Cod U Like (next to Dirty Desmond's adult mag emporium). I obviously also love Scotch eggs, Welsh rarebit, Irish stew, Cornish pasties, Yorkshire pudding, Cheddar cheese and Leicestershire tiramisu. (Please check I haven't left anyone out, will you, Alastair? T.B.)



DYKE 'SILENT' OVER BARRYMORE

by Our Media Staff **Pool Johnson**

MR GREG DYKE, the popular entertainer, was today silent over allegations of how a book came to be discovered in the BBC.

Witnesses described how Mr Barrymore had been invited back to the BBC and had taken "cash" in a sordid frenzy of greed.

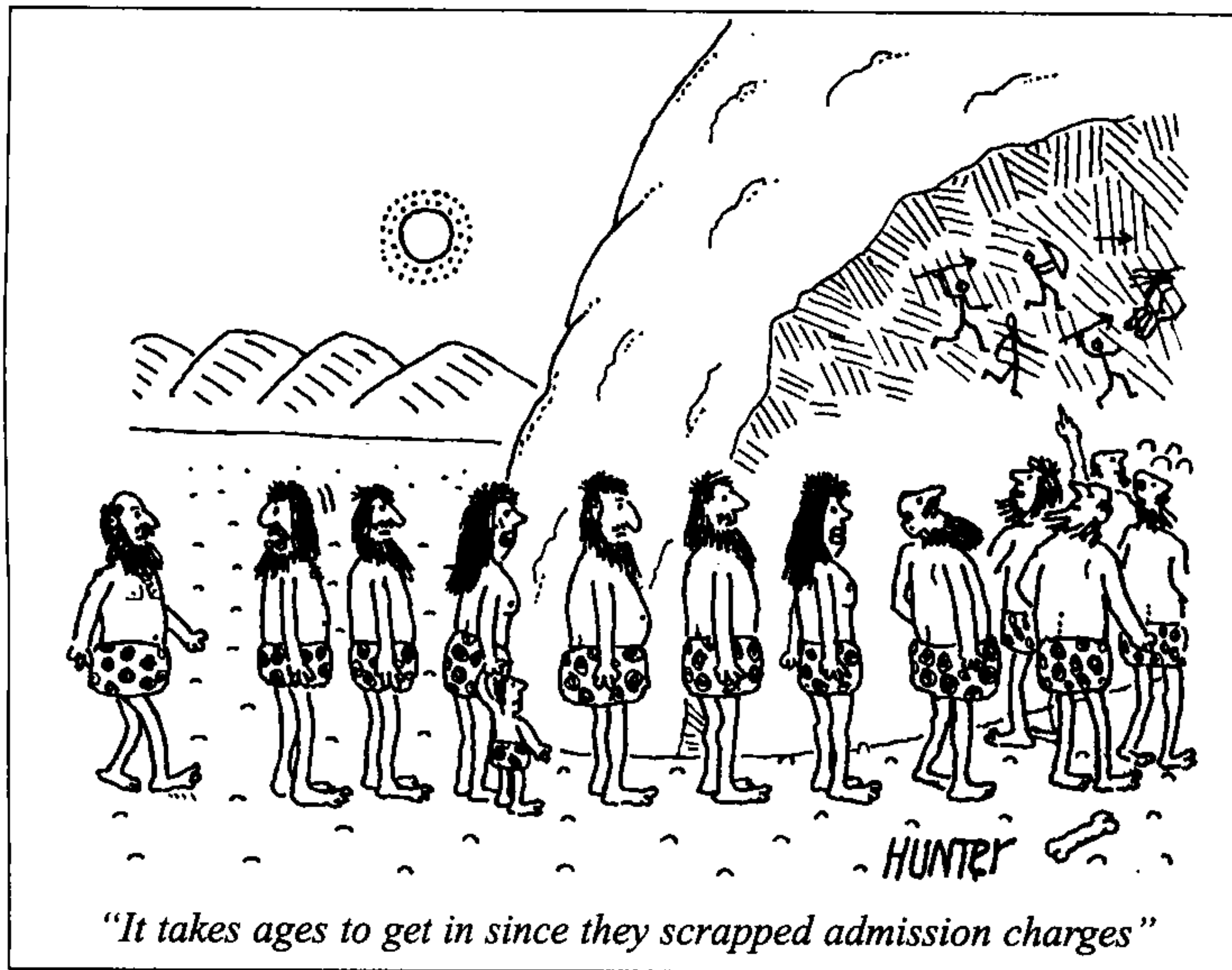
Said one witness, "There was a lot of money floating around and most of it ended up in

Barrymore's pocket."

But Mr Dyke was remaining tight-lipped about the incident.

Bum's The Word

"I have no idea how this happened. I was completely out of it. I woke up in the morning and there was this book in my in-tray. I panicked and decided to publish it in the hope of making lots of money."



School news

St Cakes

Obesity Term begins today. There is only room for three boys in the school. J.N. Lard-Bucket (Dumplings) is Senior Fatso. B. Bunter (Porkers) is Scoffer of the Pies. There will be no run this year over Founders Meadow, following medical advice. The new

McDonald's Wing for Catering Studies will be opened by the Right Hon. Nicholas Soames (O.C.) on November 3rd. There will be a performance of "Hello, Mr Chips" in the school dining room every day, sponsored by McCain's Oven Ready Fries. The Founder's Day Dinner will be held in the tuck shop on St Cake's Day on 23rd November. Coronaries will be on December 3rd.

London Fashion Week

TONY is wearing this autumn's smartest outfit. From the "Man At CIA" range, Tony is sporting waist-hugging "Dubya" chinos with matching no-nonsense "Bible" belt, topped with a stylish "Bushman" jacket and special "Historic Tie". The look that says "Let's Kick Ass". Perfect for town and desert wear.



BOY IS 18 SHOCK

by Our Entire Staff

A YOUNG schoolboy celebrated his 18th birthday yesterday (Reuters).

On Other Pages

● 100s of pictures of 18-year-old boy **2-21**

● What happens when a boy becomes 18 by Dr Thomas Stutterford **22**

● What other famous people looked like when they were 18 **22-38**

● Get yourself a hair-style like the 18-year-old boy **38**

PLUS

What The 18-Year-Old Can Now Do Legally

- He can drink in a pub surrounded by loads of paparazzi photographers.
- He can run past hordes of paparazzi photographers to see an 18 film.
- Move into a new home which is completely ringed by hundreds of paparazzi photographers.
- Drive very fast through the streets of Paris whilst being chased by hordes of paparazzi... (Er... that's enough things Harry can legally do. Ed.)

Top of the World Observatories, World Trade Center, Tower 2 323-2340. Two observation decks, on the 107th and 110th floors, indoors and outdoors. The only thing you can't see from here is the future. *NY Pages, City Guide, 2000*



"I'm ringing about this dishwasher I bought from you yesterday."

TORIES' NEW PLAN

by Our Political Staff **Peter O'Bore**

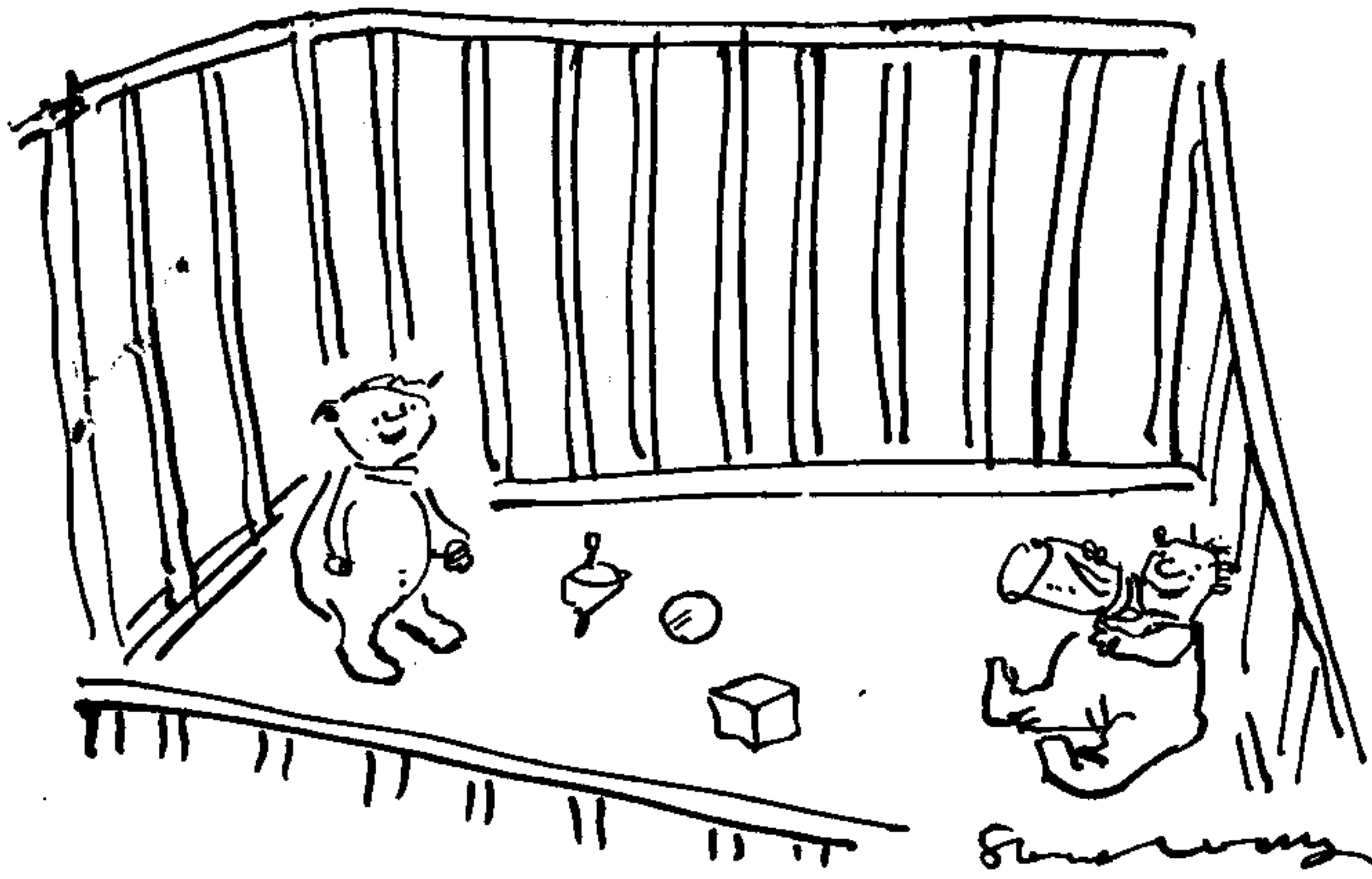
THE CONSERVATIVE Party has announced a radical new five-point plan to win back the hearts and minds of its disenchanted supporters.

That Plan In Full

1. Introduction of a so-called "Welfare State", guaranteeing state benefits "from the cradle to the grave".
2. A "National Health Service" with healthcare free at the point of delivery - including glasses and false teeth.
3. Nationalisation of key industries, such as the railways, bringing them under state control.
4. Conservative Party to be renamed "Old Labour".
5. Iain Duncan Smith to change name to Iain Nye-Bevan.

Late News

Michael Foot To Join Tories Shock 94



"Juice is a gateway drug to cola..."



That Slade Honorary Degree Citation in Full

SALUTAMUS SLADUM, GROUPUM POPULARUM CANTORUM DE WOLVERHAMPTONE CONURBATIONE IN 'TERRA NIGRA' APPELATUS, TERRIBILIS GLAMI ROCKERI IN DECADE MCMLXX-MCMLXXX, FAMOSISSIMUS PER SINGULUS CELEBRATENS FESTIVALIS DIES NATALIS JESUM CHRISTUM: "HIC EST JOVIALIS XMASENSIS ET OMNES GAUDENT". DISCUS COMPULSORIUS PER MULTOS ANNOS IN PRECINCTIS MERCUNTALIBUS, EG, BRENTUS CROSSUS, PARTICULARE IN OMNES TESCONES, WOOLIES, MARCUS SPARKUSQUE. LUDET CONSTANTER IN RADIO DUO WOGANENSIS. SALUTAMUS NODDIUS HOLDERUS (PRIMUS CANTORUS), DAVUS HILLUS (PRIMUS GUITARUS), JIMMUS LEA (SECUNDUS GUITARUS), DONNUS POWELLIUS (PERCUSSIONIS).

© The University of Wolverhampton
(formerly Wrekin and Telford New Town Polytechnic).

Late News

MPs DON'T FAVOUR ATTACK

A SURVEY has revealed that 80% of Labour backbenchers don't favour attacking Tony Blair.

"He's a feared leader known for ruthlessly suppressing dissent," said one backbencher who asked not to be named, "but open warfare with Blair now would be too damaging, particularly to my prospects of ever becoming a cabinet minister."

BUSH DOSSIER SHOCK

THE Bush Administration has made public a dossier that reveals that Saddam Hussein has over the last few years amassed a huge stockpile of both biological and non-biological washing powder.

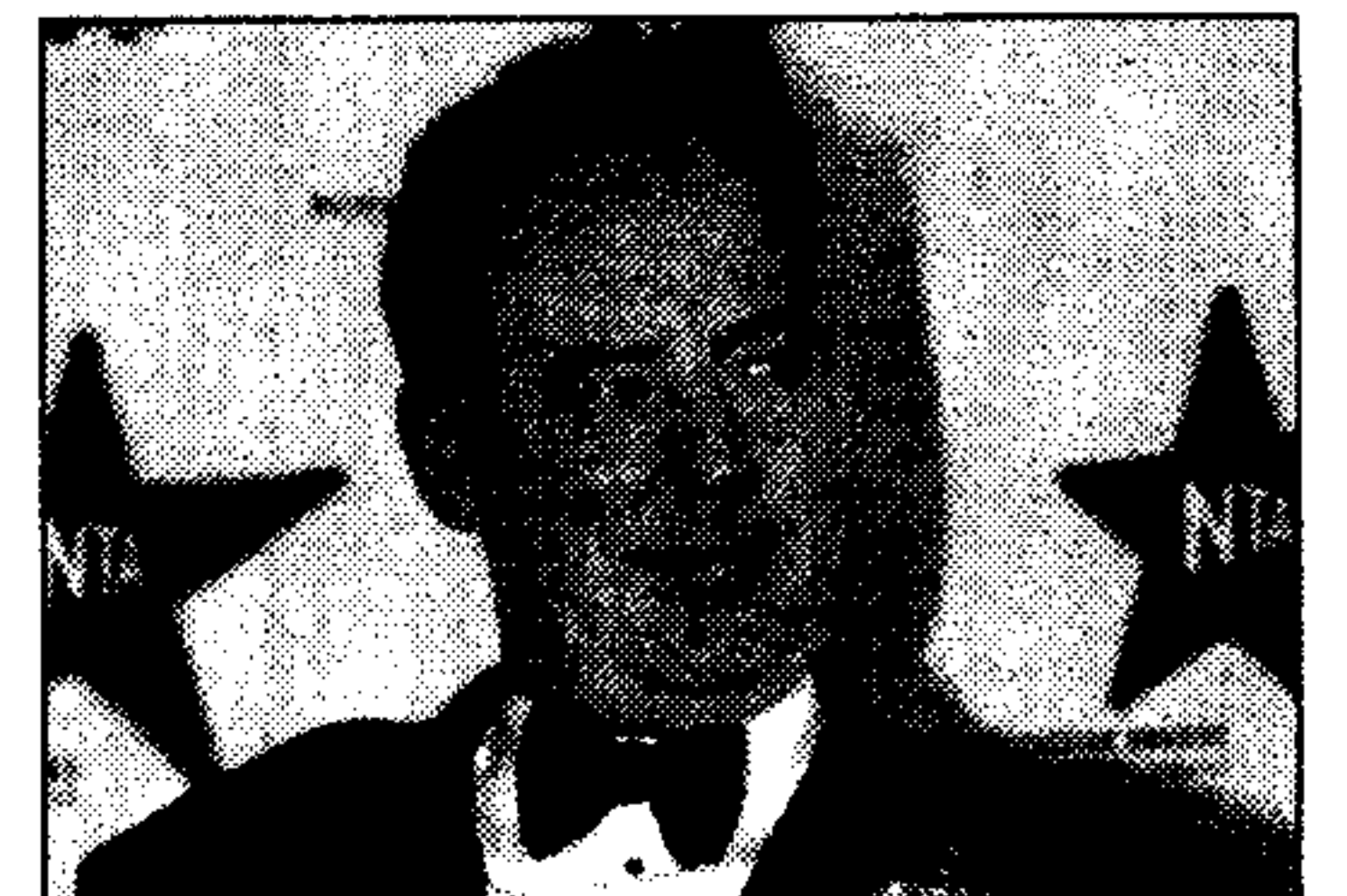
"We believe these stockpiles could be used either to launch a massive first strike against targets throughout the West, or to do his cotton shirts," said a clearly shaken U.S. President... (cont. p. 94)

TV HIGHLIGHTS

Six Feet Under

E4, Mondays, 10.00pm

THE premiere of the second series about a weird dysfunctional American family in the funeral business. In this episode George W. has taken over running the firm from his Dad, and claims to have a plan that will mean business will be booming within months.



Children Say The Funniest Things

ITV, Saturday, 7.30pm

MICHAEL Barrymore hosts a brand new series.

TV Presenters Don't Say Anything At All

ITV, Saturday, 8.00pm

MICHAEL Barrymore appears at the Coroners' Court.

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOD



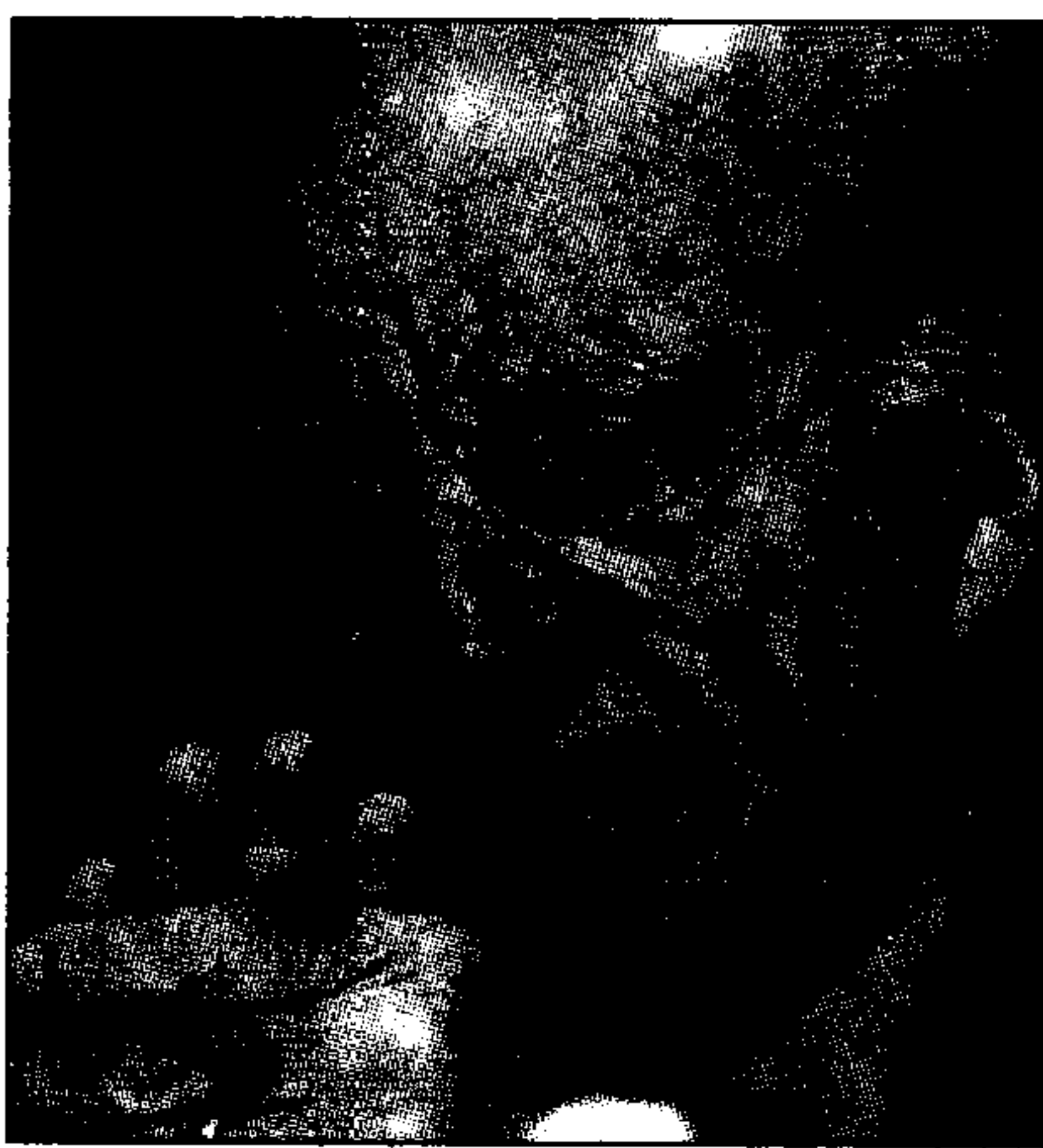
● What You Won't Read In The Sun



Friday, September 20, 2002

**GREED
ALL
ABOUT IT!**

FAT CAT DIGGER TAKES MILLION POUND PAY RISE AS COMPANY LOSES A FORTUNE



by No-One

RUPERT MURDOCH shocked the world when he last night decided he wasn't rich enough. So he looted a huge pile of cash from his starving employees to

lavish on his saucy playmate and their love-child.

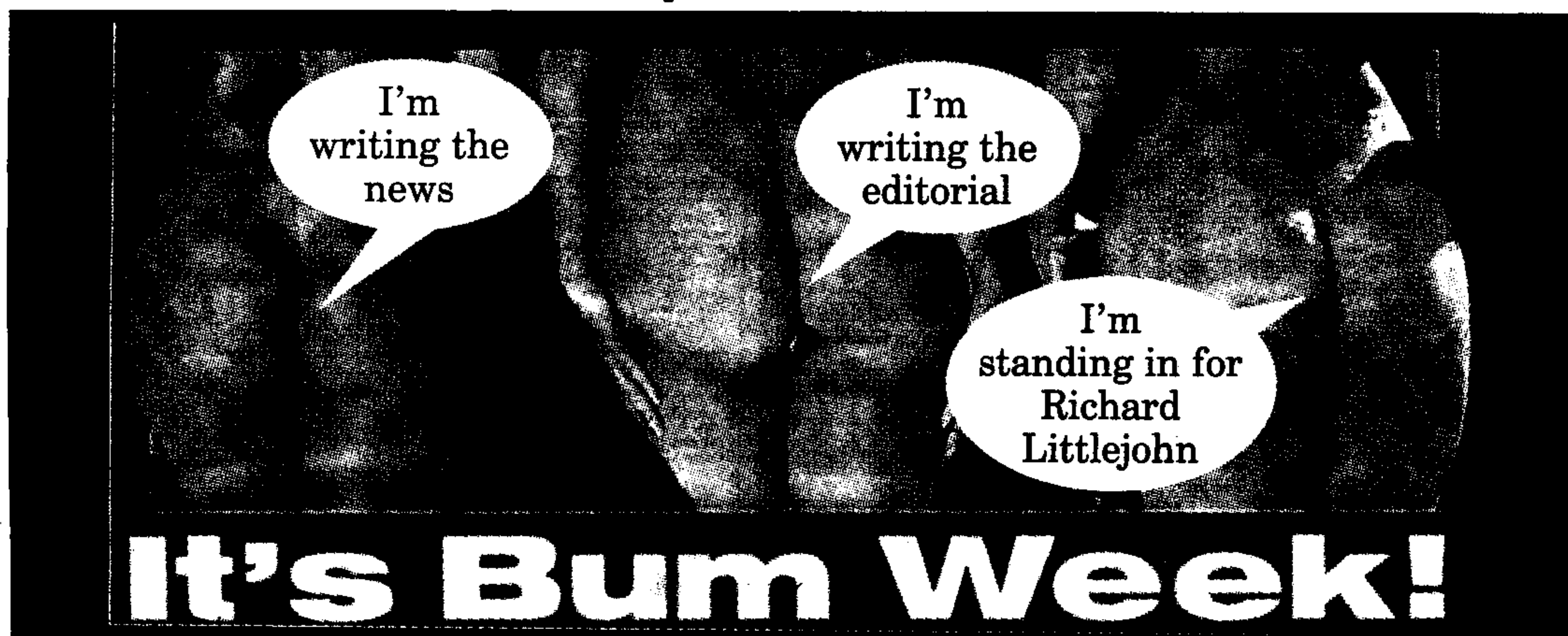
What a rat (*doesn't continue p. 94*)

ON OTHER PAGES

● **Britain's Paedophiles Lead the World** – we may be the world's worst cricketers and our

tennis players are hopeless but when it comes to molesting children around the world the Brits are on top. Three cheers for our Red, White and Blue Paedos that make you proud to be British.

● What You Do Actually See In The Sun (except for the bubbles)



ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK



**PROFESSOR
RICHARD
DAWKINS**

Do you think we are genetically programmed to use spoons?

Everything we do is genetically programmed, except of course religious belief which is just silly.

Has this got anything to do with spoons?

Of course any idiot can see that. A spoon is just a spoon. It doesn't pretend to be anything else. It's only the churches that come up with this ludicrous idea that a spoon might be something other than it is. It's just God again, ruining everything. Let me emphasise that a spoon is nothing more than a physical object, created to promote the evolutionary needs of the gene pool. You're trying to suggest that spoons have some kind of metaphysical significance, over and above their basic molecular composition, aren't you? I can tell. I expect you're a Catholic. They're the worst!

Do you own any spoons?

These questions you're asking remind me of the Catechism. Why should I answer? All you're trying to do is make me declare that I believe in spoons, which I don't.

Has anything amusing ever happened to you in connection with a spoon?

There you go again, dragging God into it.

NEXT WEEK: Archbishop Tutu – "Me And My Tutu."



"Mother and father are at overwork at the moment, may I be of assistance?"

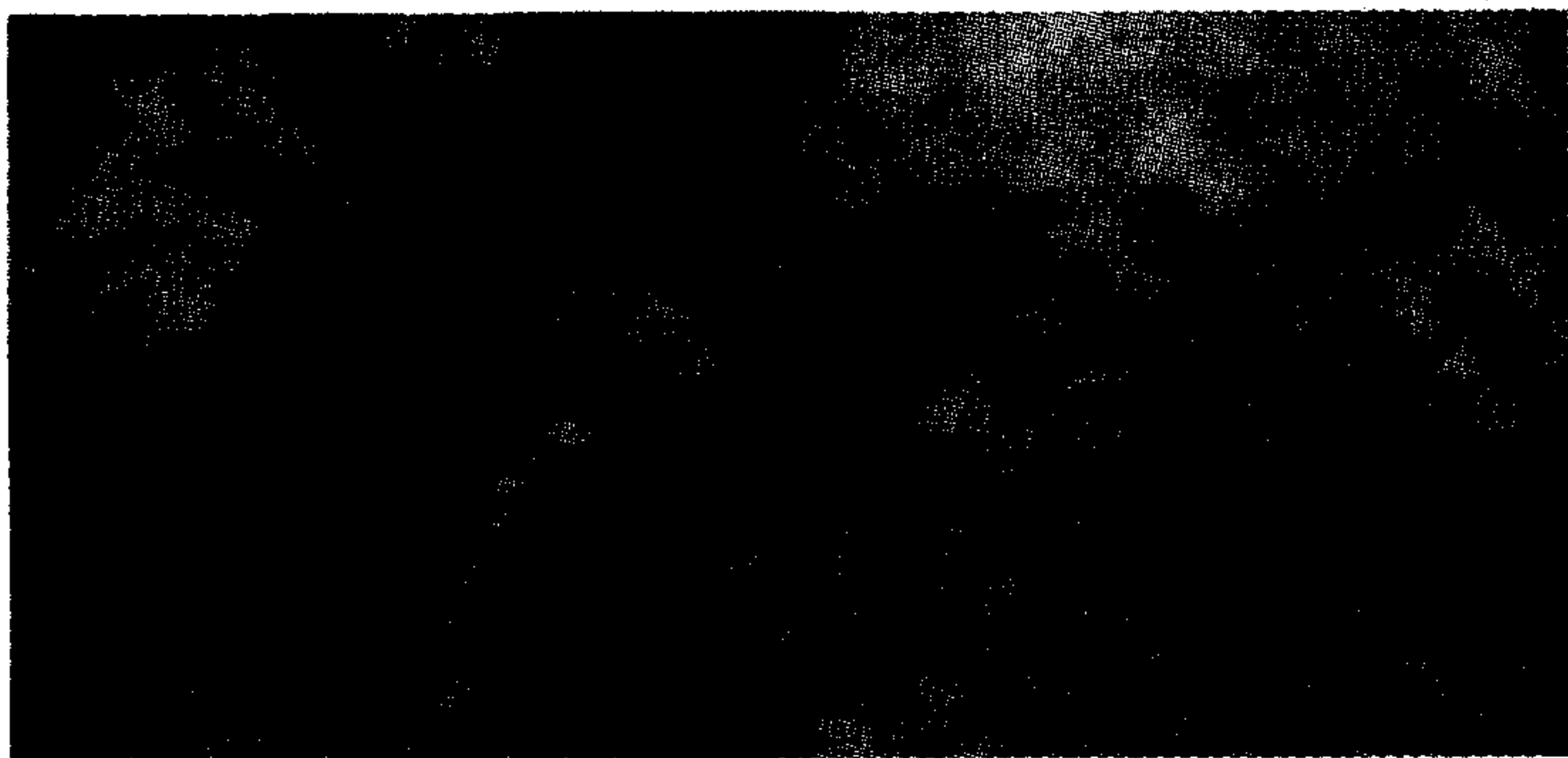
SADDAM 'ONLY HOURS AWAY' FROM NUKING WORLD

by Our Terror Staff **Melanie Filps**

A TERRIFYING report, published today by the prestigious Institute You've Never Heard Of Before, reveals that Saddam Hussein could be on the verge of achieving full nuclear capability at any time in

the next few weeks.

"All he has to do," says the report, "is to acquire the nuclear materials, assemble an expert team capable of putting all the pieces together, and he could then have a fully operational nuclear device within a matter of only ten years or so."



This aerial picture clearly shows the type of remote desert site where Saddam could be planning to install the launching pads from which nuclear missiles aimed at Britain could be fired. (Reuters)

THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR KIDS

No. 94

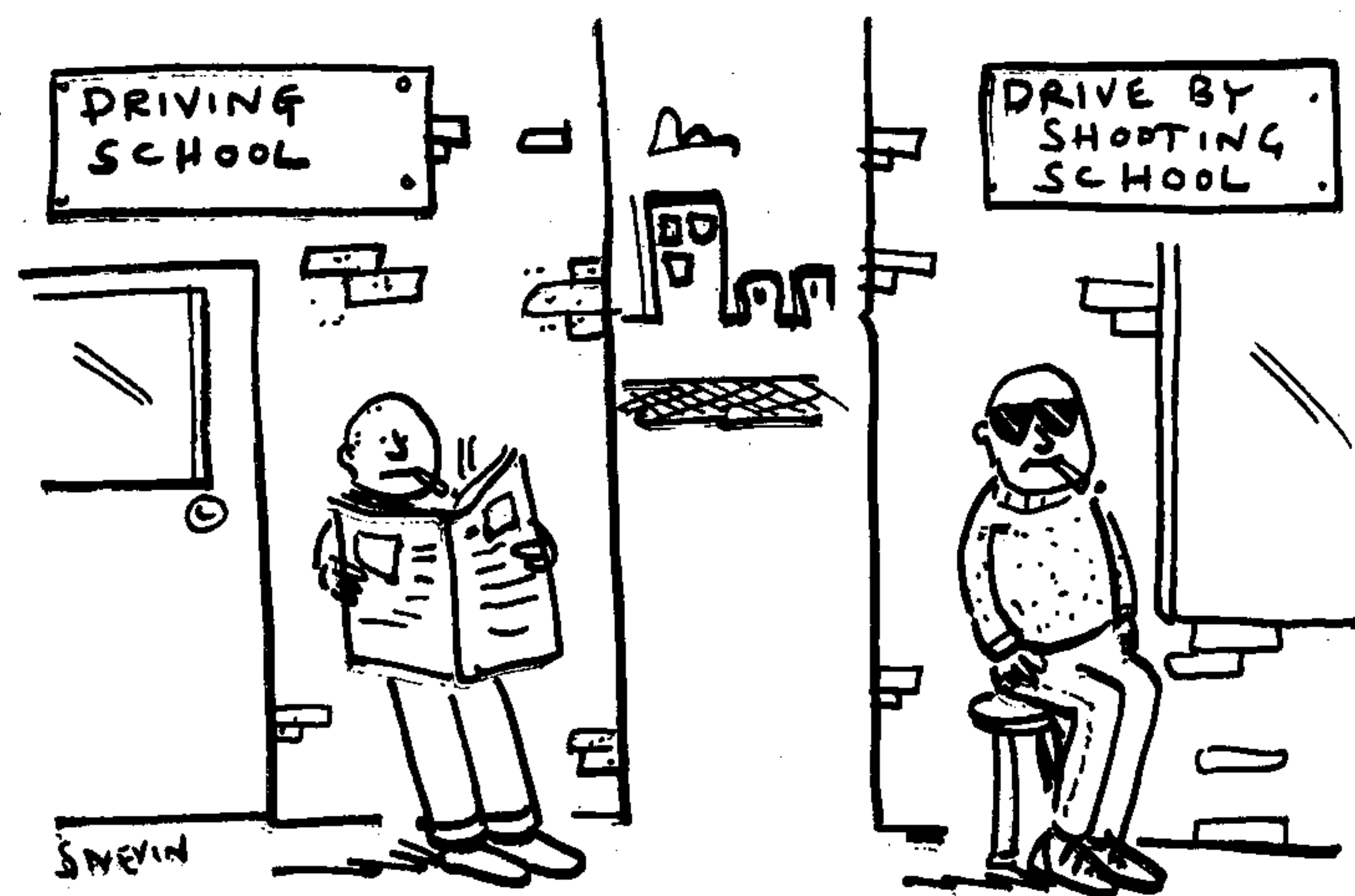
If your kids are bored with school, why not take them out on a day trip to the local magistrates court?

Hours of fun can be had painting colourful placards reading "String 'em up", creating nooses to wave, and banging on the top of vans screaming "Rot

in Hell you scum".

Children will love it and it's educational too, introducing them to concepts of justice at an early age (National Curriculum Key Stage 7(b)(iii)).

Check local press for details of upcoming court appearances of accused.



ONE YEAR ON

Private Eye's special 911-page supplement to commemorate the anniversary of the earthquake that shook the world

IT IS exactly one year ago that the world changed for ever when, totally out of the blue, Iain Duncan Smith became leader of the Conservative Party.

Private Eye asked a group of top opinion-formers to look back over the momentous events which followed the cataclysm that became known to the world simply as "13/11".

Lord Rees-Mogg

(antiquarian bookseller in West Country):



IT WAS totally unexpected. Even I didn't predict it, with my long experience of getting every-thing wrong. Even in Somerset, people didn't quite know how to react. Some people went to church to pray. Others sat in their studies writing columns for the Times.

Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford

(author and broadcaster):



IT WAS a terrible shock. Many people asked me in the days that followed, "If there is a God, Bishop, why does he allow this sort of thing to happen?" It's never easy for a Christian to answer that one. But I think what we can say, very definitely, is that God moves in a mysterious way and it is not always open to us to know why certain things happen in the way they do."

Iain Duncan Smith (party leader):
NO COMMENT.

Christine Hamilton

(Television personality):



IT WAS just awful. This great edifice, which we'd all grown up with as part of the scenery, suddenly it was gone. Just a hole where it used to be. Even now I can't take it in. These people just wiped out the whole Tory Party, just like that. When I see the film of it on television, it makes me shudder. I still can't believe that it happened.

Christopher "The Hitch" Hitchens

(Professor of Martin Amis Studies at the University of Burger King):



WHEN they flagged up on the scoreboard that the most impossible thing in the world had suddenly become not just possible but horrifyingly only too actual, the emotions go into overdrive, taking in the whole gamut of human emotion from A to B. I'm sorry, what am I writing about again?

Boris Johnson

(editor of the Beano and Tory MP for Henley-on-Thames):



BLIMEY! Cripes! Duncan Smith! I mean, who'd have thought it! Still, it makes you think! If they could go for an obvious no-hoper like Duncan whatever-his-name, then why not me? Tally ho! "Beano Boris" for PM!

DIARY

I like to think I've made a number of contributions to my son-in-law's success – and, let's be honest, to the success of the Labour Party as a whole.

As a young man, I advised my close friend Clem Attlee to do something about the old and the poor, two groups of people I have a hell of a lot of time for. Result: he started the Welfare State.

In the Sixties, I told my good mate Harry Wilson that football's a great game, one of the very best. Result: England wins the World Cup.

And just the other day, I rang Tony Blair, my son-in-law, and left a message saying no-one should be allowed to get away with bombing the Empire State Building, there's frankly no excuse for that kind of behaviour. Result: Tony declared war on the forces of evil, and told his pal Bush to do the same.

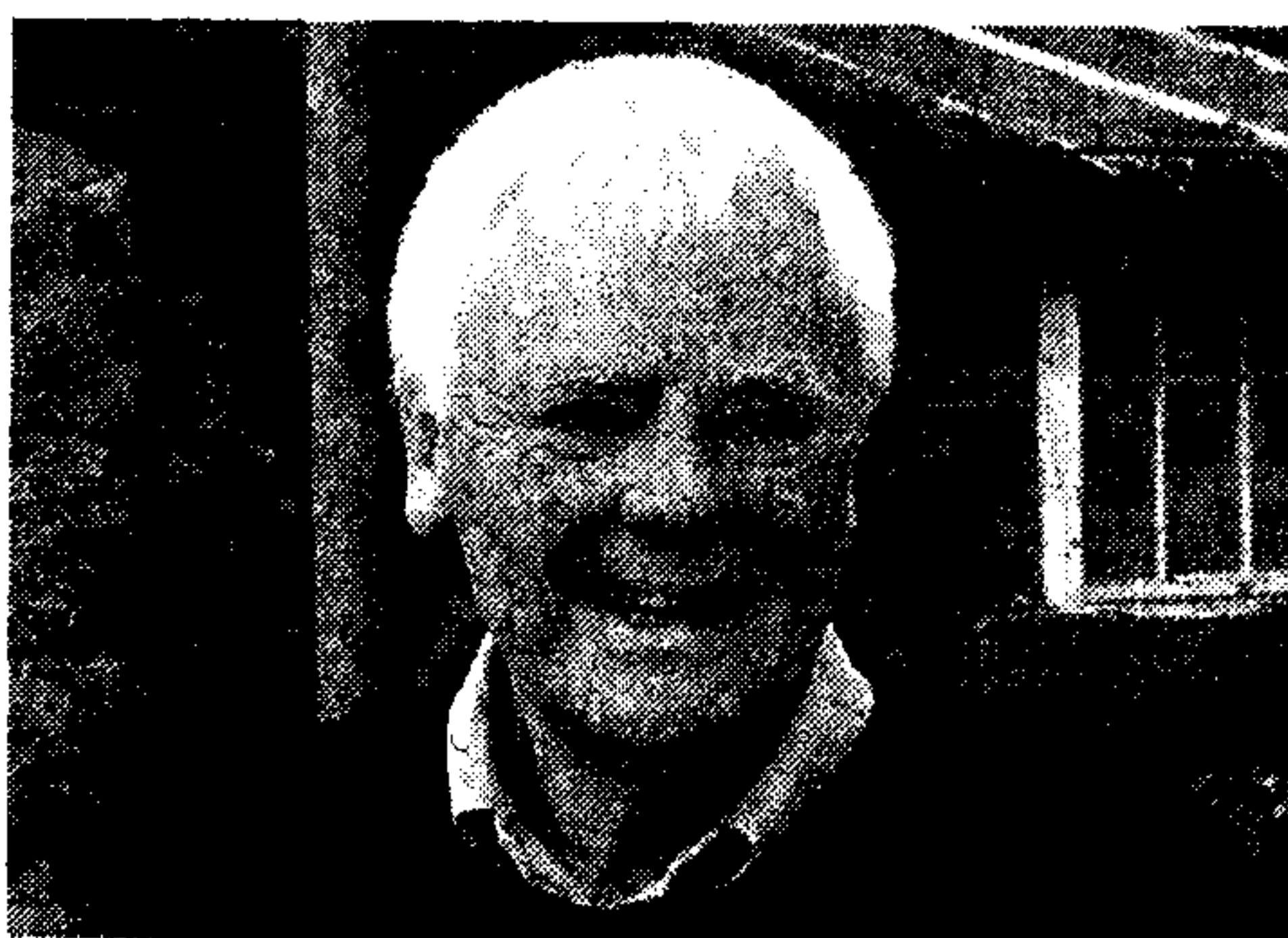
I speak my mind, me. Always have done, always will. That's the way I am – and if you don't bloody like it, you can shove it up your arse, mate.

That's what I told the Saudi Ambassador over informal drinks at Number 10. As the father-in-law to the newly-elected Prime Minister, I'd become something of an ambassador for this country myself – and I didn't care who bloody knew it.

It was in this spirit – I'm not a good liar, never have been, it's my worst failing, I freely admit it – that when the Saudi Bloody Ambassador started telling me I'd be welcome in his homeland I started seeing red.

"Don't you go inviting me to your bloody country, mate," I countered, "Wouldn't go near the bloody hellhole. Not when you don't let the blokes have a jar or two down the boozier or let the birds get their bloody tits out for the lads. You know what? You can stuff your sodding country down the khazi, mate."

Anyway, word of my strongly-held political views re: the whole Arab issue got back to my son-in-law, the Prime Minister. No bloody mistake they did. Tony could instantly see the sense in what I said. From that moment, he started plotting to wage war on evil Saudi dictator Saddam Hussein – to my mind not a second too soon.



TONY BOOTH

But let's not beat around the bush. Some people close to Tony don't like my influence.

Gordon bloody Brown, for example. All this talk about Gordon becoming PM! Says who? Don't make me laugh! The guy might know about sums and long division and all that stuff. But he's a coward. How do I know? Because when I challenged him to an arm-wrestling contest during a reception at Number 10 for the French President, he just walked away, pleading another appointment. Sissy or what?

As the Prime Minister's father-in-law, I've enjoyed a unique ringside seat in Downing Street these past six years, and I've kept a unique record of everything I've said. But, let me tell you, what I've learnt about the real character of Gordon Brown doesn't bear repeating.

I'm giving away no secrets when I reveal he's a dark, obsessive character who spends his days brooding and plotting. I've got no firm proof that he's some kind of serial killer, with severed corpses stacked up in neat rows in his hoity-toity filing cabinets – but what I do know is that those close to him don't like him. Not one bloody bit they don't.

Another one who gets on my goat is Peter Mandelson. He's not my sort of bloke. You should see him in Number 10. Swans around as if he owns the place, Cherie this, Tony that. Hang on, buster, I want to tell him, it's not your son-in-law who's Prime Minister. But I've learnt to keep my mouth shut.

I freely admit it. Fierce loyalty is a failing of mine. Sorry folks, can't help it, it's in the jeans. Within the family, we can say what we like to

each other – but it should stay in the family before going to the Press. I feel that very strongly. So when another daughter, Lauren (I've had more daughters, bless 'em, than you could shake a stick at, after several well-publicised romantic liasons with some of the world's most fanciable birds of the unfeathered variety – but more of that later!) goes around telling family tittle-tattle to the gentlemen of the press, I put my bloody foot down. "How dare you!" I say, "That's MY exclusive."

I've always been permitted one-to-one access with Cherie and Tony's kids, so long as Ali remains present, and I'm pleased to say they love their dear old Grandad very much. The whole family loves to play hide-and-seek when I drop by. Last time I was there, I eventually found them out the back, stuffed into the people-carrier, with Tony frantically trying to work the ignition! "Found you!" I shouted, but by that time they had swept away, bless 'em.

Let's not pretend I agree with everything Tony thinks. What halfway decent socialist could? For instance, I believe in justice, compassion and equality for all, and Tony doesn't. Fair enough. On the other hand, Tony passionately believes in letting his lah-di-bloody-dah middle-class friends feather their own nests, while I believe in a far-reaching redistribution of wealth to the suffering and needy. We agree to differ. But we keep our disagreements within the family. I'd no sooner reveal Tony's craven sycophancy to the rich and powerful than I would betray my own strongly-held socialist principles. The main thing about Tony is he's not only my son-in-law but a bloody good listener. When we meet each year for Christmas drinkie-poops at Number 10 and I want to bend his ear on a major political matter – the right to strike, the workers owning the means of production, etc – he always insists I put my opinions down on tape and post them on. Then he can digest them at his leisure. But the main thing is we keep our differences "in the family" – it's the only honourable way.

(EXTRACTED from "I Taught My Prime Minister Son-in-Law Everything He Knows – Now He's Pissing It All Away" by Tony Booth, published by Weidenfeld, £18.99)

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER



Literary Review

Grapes of Roth

The Autograph Man

Zadie Smith

(Hamish Hamilton, £16.99)

STAGE-FRIGHT happens when an actor, often at the peak of their success, becomes painfully aware of the audience, the mystery of talent and the possibility of failure. But there's a literary equivalent too – page-fright – and Zadie Smith's second novel is a great shaking bout of it.

From the Groucho to the Dog And Duck, the fable is told of how Ms Smith took the most familiar surname in Britain and made it bigger: an almost unprecedented example outside genre literature of a writer becoming a phenomenon with their first novel. A million-strong readership at the first time of asking will be further fattened as the paperback TV tie-in edition of *White Teeth* (lavishly dramatised by Channel 4 across four Tuesdays) chases her new hardback, *The Autograph Man*, out of the stores.

Smith has easily avoided the traditional second-novel trap of writing the same book again but, in moving away from *White Teeth*, she's gone into herself. The subject of *The Autograph Hunter* is becoming a big name. The central character, Alex, is obsessed with the famous but, where some such types are desperate to drop names, his mania is for picking them up. His prized collection of celebrity signatures lacks Kitty Alexander, a Hollywood star who hides herself away.

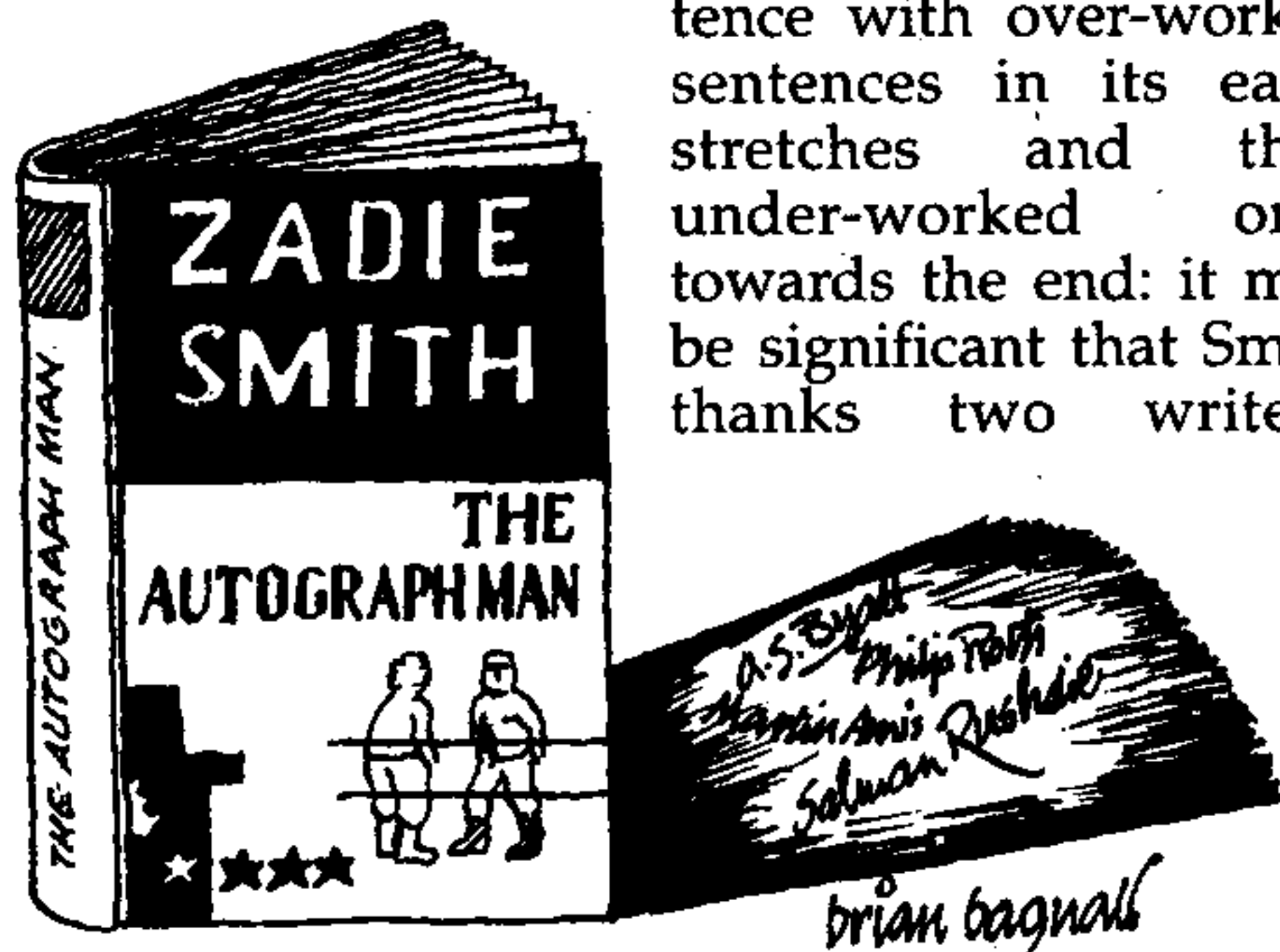
The characters in *The Autograph Man* are largely Jewish and this shows a significant shift in Smith's literary models. The household gods of her first novel were Salman Rushdie and Martin Amis. Here it's Philip Roth.

This is significant both because America is the clearly the market which Smith's handlers now want her to crack – the second half of the book is set in New York, a more

internationally saleable location than Willesden – but also because Roth established a particular strategy for coping with becoming a literary phenomenon. The American novelist followed a surprise literary superseller – *Portnoy's Complaint* – by writing novels about fame and the dislocating nature of success in the Zuckerman Quartet.

For Smith as well, the colossal success of the first book has become the subject of the second. The book

feels forced into existence with over-worked sentences in its early stretches and then under-worked ones towards the end: it may be significant that Smith thanks two writers'



retreats where she went to get the novel finished. Page-fright.

As if physically distancing itself from the full-colour production stills on the front of the TV tie-in *White Teeth*, the cover of *The Autograph Man* has shades of B.S. Johnson-type games by including three small-print short stories on the back of the dust-jacket. And, as also happened with Roth, her prose style has become denser and trickier in this book: consciously or sub-consciously posting a notice to the mass audience reading: Keep Out!

It seems a truism to say that all writers want a big audience but the relationship between writers and readers is far more complicated. Popularity makes some writers wobbly, nervous of being thought of as a sort of post-graduate J.K. Rowling. They use the financial security of a hit to court artistic obscurity, seeking refuge from populism in literature.

Roth's Zuckerman books decimated the American readership he'd established with *Portnoy*. Jeanette Winterson, a big bestseller after *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, abandoned autobiographical narra-

tive for dense experimentalism, as did Adam Thorpe, who retreated screaming from the readability of *Ulverton* into the limp tricksiness of *Still* and *Nineteen Twenty-One*. In sport, they call it "choking".

With *The Autograph Man*, Zadie Smith also tries to leap off the bandwagon. While *White Teeth* deserves its handsome place on the New Fiction table, this sequel should properly be filed by booksellers under Psychology. *The Autograph Man* is about a big name who'd like to be a smaller one for a while.

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination

Peter Ackroyd

(Chatto & Windus, £25)

I The Tree

The poetry of England is born in a glade hedged round with the shadows of the ancient trees. Made of wood, ever sprouting their charming and tremulous leaves, their roots extending far underground, bark-adorned, they bring mystery and enchantment to the poetic imagination. Thus Sir Hugh de Hee in his fifteenth century "A Pretty Chaunt to ye Verdant Woodland" remarks that:

*A canopy of grene fronds dost ere
enclose
The wood wherein my ladye goes*

In much the same spirit, four hundred years later, the Lincolnshire dialect poet Silas Bole intriguingly observes:

*Alas! The lofted arching tree!
That harbinger of melancholy
Ash and elm and oak and larch
Proud sentinels of my funeral march*

Tennyson, clearly, had seen a tree, otherwise he would not have been able to write "Come into the Garden Maud". In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* there is a fascinating conversation between Connie and Mellors: "What is that large tall thing in the field with bits sticking out of it?" "Don't be so bloody soft lass, 'tis a tree." Potent, symbolic, tall, thin, often with green decorations, the tree bestrides the interior life of England.

And yet this is no calm and sequestered bower. Trees can fall down. They can sicken and die. The Plantagenet poet Eorpwald the Lame writes of a birch tree that "fell upon this mannes head/and presentlee did kill him ded". A fourteenth century legend records the arrival in the English forests of the giant Ag-royd

who, together with his demonic helpers Chatto and Windus, sets out to fell the mighty oaks in order to "render them into countless bokes fit for Master Ottaker's remainder traye...". (continues for hundreds of pages...)



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

THE book world's slavish adoration of yooft was clear to see last week with its coverage of the death of novelist William Cooper at 92.

Cooper, whose *Scenes From Provincial Life* (1950) almost single-handedly created the 50s literary school of Amis, Wain and Co, died on the same day that Zadie Smith's new novel, *The Autograph Man*, began to appear on literary editors' desks.

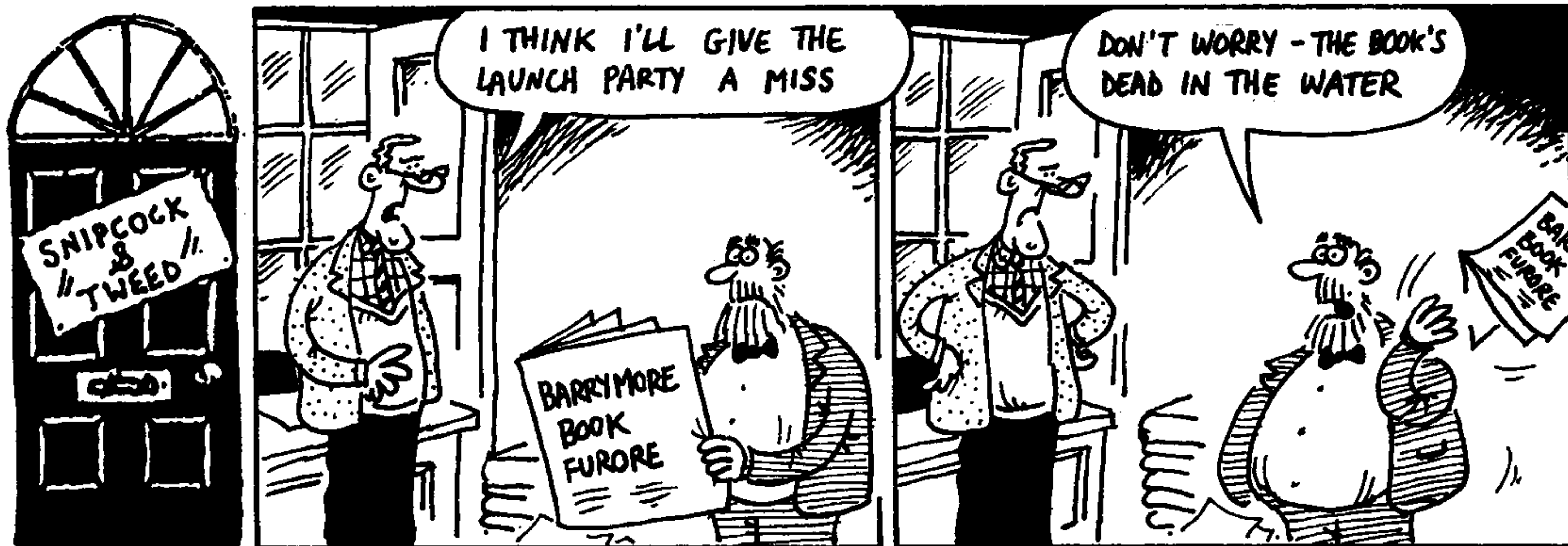
What happened? Miss Smith got profiled in three weekend newspapers, had her kitchen featured in the *Sunday Times* and her writing hideaway lavishly described in the *Sunday Telegraph* – before anyone had even got round to reviewing the book.

Cooper, on the other hand, was given a single decent obituary in the *Independent*. Of other memorials, the *Telegraph* couldn't be bothered to update a piece that had clearly lain in the files for years; the *Guardian* effort was written by someone with no personal knowledge; while the *Times* appreciation looked as if it been borrowed from elsewhere. No point in adding that scarcely a single title in Cooper's voluminous output remains in print.

HOW curious that the *Daily Telegraph* should describe the job of writing the official biography of Sir Vidia Naipaul as "much sought-after" when there could hardly be a much more thankless task on offer in the world of books. Lady Naipaul claimed she had been "fighting off" candidates for the job before choosing Patrick French; but, prestige apart, who would really want the gig?

The *Torygraph* admitted that Naipaul's "behaviour has been described as curmudgeonly and even 'monstrous'", and referred back to the massive strop that VS got into when Paul Theroux published *Sir Vidia's Shadow*, a less-than-favourable portrait of their soured friendship. French has said the book would take him five to ten years to write. So, that'll be half a decade at least of bullying and browbeating, French ultimately being on a hiding to nothing, with Naipaul having approval of the final product. Lady Naipaul described French as ideal for the job, having "no malice". It will be interesting to see how long that condition lasts under pressure.

'Bookworm'



REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

ANNE Robinson's *Memoirs of an Unfit Mother* was sold to Little, Brown by Ed Victor for an advance in the mid six-figure range and started life at £16.99. It's now yours for £3.99 at The Works in Colchester.

Absolute cock

Once More, with Feeling

Victoria Coren and
Charlie Skelton

Fourth Estate, £10.99

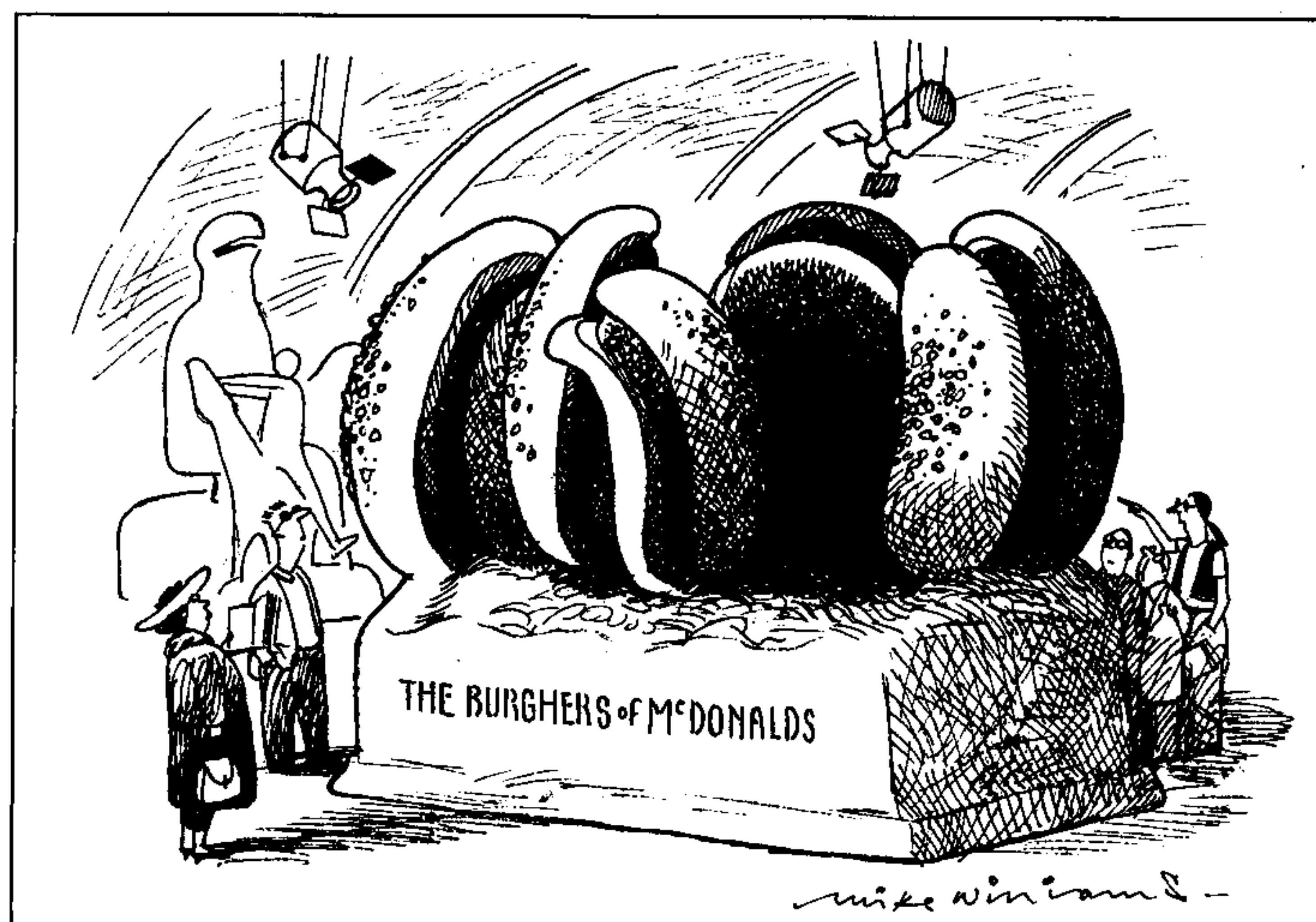
PORNOGRAPHY takes another step into the cultural mainstream with the arrival of this tacky little tome from two people who should know better.

After years of helpful research from Channels 4 and 5 demonstrating that porn makes profits (and is cheap to produce, whether as itself or as a spurious documentary about the porn industry), book publishing has finally found a way to join the seedy party: encourage a couple of authors to play the role of novice pornographers and tell the world their story.

Step forward Vicky Coren and Charlie Skelton. She is the daughter of *News Quiz* buffer Alan Coren, he the son of a Suffolk vicar. Thus it is that two middle class kids get down and dirty with Los Angeles porn has-beens and Bosnian porn wannabes – and commit their experience to video in Amsterdam because they'd be locked up if they tried it in the UK.

Vicky and Charlie's porn saga presumes readers know what they are talking about and spares us too many graphic explanations. If you don't know what the airlock is, you probably don't want to find out. Their stated ambition is to make "the best porn film ever" without exploiting anybody. Actors are paid above the going rate, no one has to have sex with any one they don't like or in positions they cannot comfortably accommodate. But that's as close to the moral high ground as anyone gets.

Like all discussions of porn the book is deeply unerotic. Even our indomitable twosome wince when filming a genre-breaking gay porn scene (apparently this has never been done before except in exclusively gay pornography). When they tell us that "Michael is soon



unbuttoning the henchman's flies to unravel a giant, dark-purple organ" you know that something revolting will follow. In this instance "a broad silver cock ring that bites into Karel's flesh below the nuts" making his penis look "like a marrow shoved through a napkin ring".

Apart from pushing the conventions of the genre (and who cares given this particular genre?) and insisting on an incomprehensible plot to link the explicit encounters, Vicky and Charlie's experiment tells us nothing we couldn't guess about porn if we could be bothered. Instead it becomes a long traveller's tale, a naughty lark, a rag week prank run crazily out of control in the hands of two Oxford grads who must surely be bright enough to realise how dim the entire enterprise is.

Charlie and Vicky met at university, failed to go out together and were wondering what to do with their arty careers when they signed up as anonymous porn reviewers for *The Erotic Review*. After one too many dull afternoons on the sofa they convinced themselves they could do better and make a mark in the mainstream. They share an oddly traditional sense of ambition – and pursue

their wet dream with puritanical zeal – for two people attempting to be radical. Throughout they are keen to be nice. Midway through filming, Vicky confesses to fearing that they will produce a "rude episode of Scooby Doo without the psychological insight". This it turns out is a pretty accurate forecast.

The film itself is unimaginable from their description of it in the book. However a select few were treated to a Soho showing on 5 September. The much vaunted plot was quickly forgotten – David Baddiel was overheard saying that all he wants in a porn film is a nice pair of buttocks spread wide.

Unsurprisingly, many of the celebrity audience for the film's premiere were stars of the screen themselves. Frank Skinner, Jack Davenport, Clive James, Jonathan Ross led the filthy field with Martin Amis representing literature in the back row. It was symptomatic of the book's debt to populist television. In its short life *Once More, With Feeling* has already been a book and a film; no doubt a documentary and film of the film will follow charting Vicky and Charlie's boddice ripping yarn. But of course it's readers who like their books to be about something that matters that are really being ripped off.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

■THE depths to which some "serious" music organisations are prepared to sink became clear last week when Sony Classical invited critics to a showcase for someone described in the invitation as "opera's latest heart-throb tenor".

Lured by the information that soulful-looking Greek Mario Frangoulis had studied at the Juilliard School, New York, and been a pupil of the legendary Alfredo Kraus, the critics were bemused to find Sony's staff canteen transformed into a fair approximation of a Billericay nightclub and the so-called opera tenor little more than an excruciating karaoke turn, belting out Moody Blues hits from the 60s to a pre-recorded backtrack. Not a note of opera.

"We're positioning him for a wider audience," said a Sony spokesman, unable to provide any better answer to the question of what a singer like Frangoulis was doing on a classical label. Turning an easy buck would have been the honest reply.

■FRANGOULIS' arrival in the vocal demi-monde of Russell Watson and Andrea Bocelli pales into insignificance beside the greater horror of a new, supposedly classical music magazine that's just appeared.

Muso, says the publisher, is aimed at younger readers; which perhaps explains a literacy level closer to the *Sun* than *Gramophone*. Take its guide to the "most bonkable" stars of the classical world. Emmanuel Pahud, described as "Flautist and Hunk", scores an impressive "Viagra factor" of 9 out of a possible 10. The pale-and-interesting tenor Ian Bostridge trails at 6.5; and poor Mario Frangoulis doesn't even get a mention. But opera's latest heart-throb will no doubt star in *Muso*'s next edition. If there is one.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Pseud's Corner

As it passed its narrative from voice to voice in an unforced democracy of idiolect, it shattered expectations of what literature was and who its heroes or owners were.

ALI SMITH on Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, *Guardian*

...the last movement particularly had the full, Mahlerian hysteria.

And Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* overture, the antithesis of music, was given an appropriately parodic reading, glutinous string textures like wading across the steppe during the thaw.

It is an utter betrayal of Shakespeare, essentially fascistic music, sickness elevated to to religion and wallowing in an unpleasantly Oedipal slice of Mother Russia-love. Buckle up, lads; time to invade Poland.

ROBERT THICKNESSE
Concert review, *The Times*

Socialite Tara Palmer-Tompkinson, drenched in bugs, maggots and scorpions, sobbed: 'I am

going to die, I am so scared.' But she told hosts Ant and Dec: 'I am going to do this [her appearance on *I am a Celebrity. Get me out of Here*]. There are people on the other side of the world having their legs blown off.'

Newcastle Metro



Anybody who knows me personally will confirm that I am a morally and politically astute person.

TRACEY EMIN
Letter to *Sunday Times*

Through Holographic Repatterning we are inspired to resonate with life-enhancing intentions and to transform our resonance with non-coherent attitudes and unconscious patterns. Through HR we bring positive change to ourselves, our relationships,

communities and ultimately our planet.

From a brochure issued by the
Holographic Repatterning Association

Go for it! Experience life to the full. Just take time to eat well while you are doing it. We have got you in mind. You are a discerning individual who deserves our **PROMISE** that this sandwich has been hand-made today from the finest ingredients by people who care.

Found on sandwich packet purchased from restaurant at the Royal Society of Horticulture gardens, Wisley

Pseud's Corporate

There's a tool called brand optimisation. It's about connecting what the essence of the brand is, what we need to communicate, and looking at all the barriers and the media opportunities. Then it looks at how you can affect all those boundaries in all the different markets and, through this black box thing called fusion, you can then plan your money.

TAMARA INGRAM, Chairman and
CEO McCann-Erickson UK,
Sunday Telegraph

CONTRIBUTORS: Nick Montagu, Jo Cole,
Don Salter, APR, Dr Richard Kennedy,
Patricia Connor, Bernard Clarke

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

RUNNING OUT OF ENERGY

THE last of the great Tory privatisations, right at the end of their term of office, was that of the nuclear industry.

Seven generators of nuclear power were sold for the price of one; and a new company, British Energy, was set up to run the generators for profit. British Energy's chairman was a distinguished businessman from Beechams, John Robb.

Pretty well everyone who knew anything about it denounced the privatisation as a disaster. The *Financial Times* warned that it was likely to prove even more expensive than the other great privatisation of the period, Railtrack. The normally pro-privatisation *Economist* described it as "a particularly creative example of bribing the voters with their own money". In three debates in the Commons, Labour and the Liberal Democrats tore the proposals to pieces.

In May 1995 George Robertson, then shadow secretary of state for Scotland, said we could all expect "a re-run of what happened in all the other privatised utilities – massive job losses, huge price increases, and directors making themselves obscenely rich at the expense of the consumer".

He asked the rather pertinent question: "What happens if the privatised company falls into difficulty? After all, it will not be just any old company. It cannot board up the windows of nuclear power stations and put up a 'To Let' sign." He predicted: "The taxpayer will have to pick up the tab." An even more accurate prediction came from Alan W Williams, then Labour MP for Carmarthen. He envisaged a "scenario for British Energy's becoming bankrupt early in the next century" (ie now).

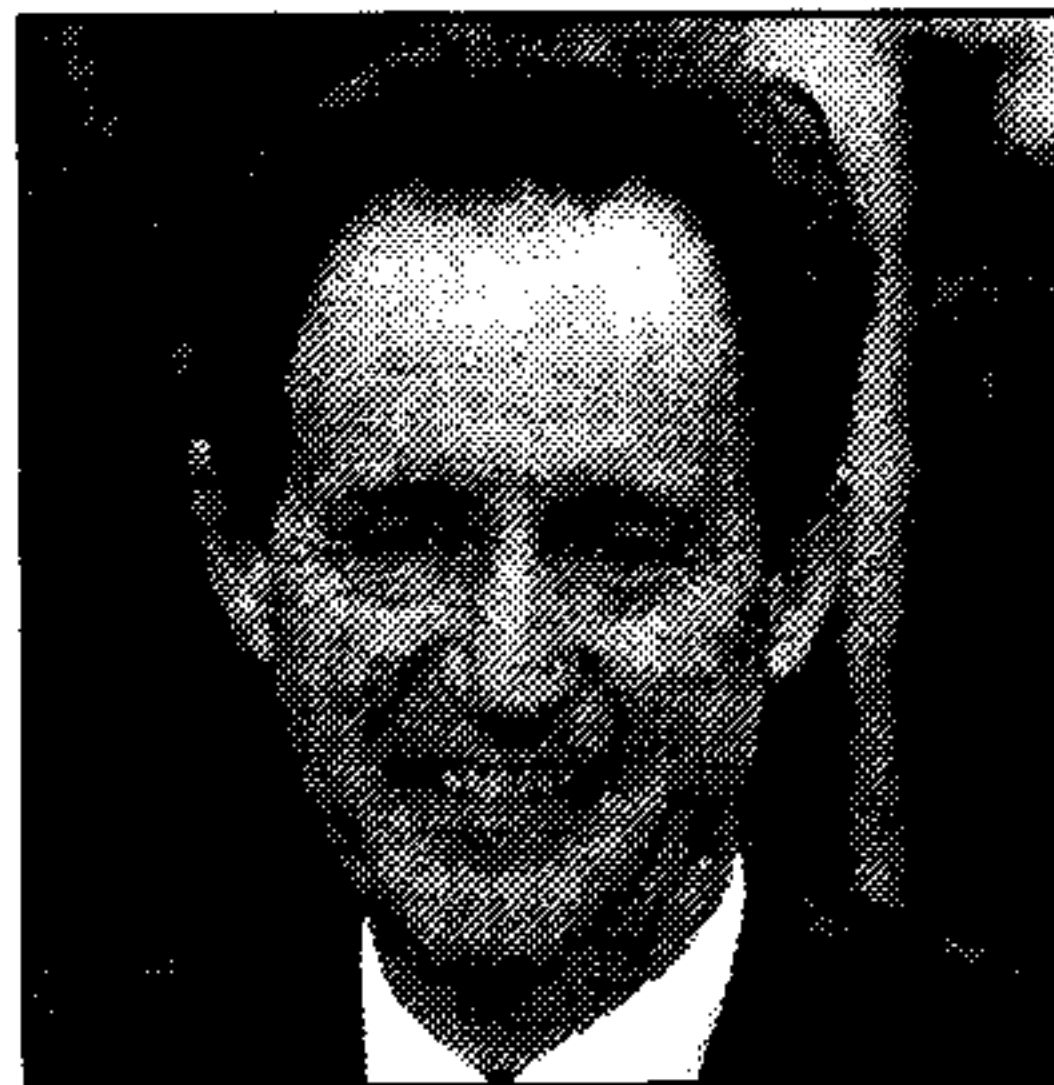
One theme was missing from the Labour offensive. There was no pledge to renationalise the privatised reactors; and as with the railways, the botched privatisation was left intact when Labour took office in 1997. As on the railways, the huge taxpayers' subsidies for the privatised industries continued unabated. All Robertson's predictions rapidly came true. Workers were sacked, prices rose, expensive investments were made abroad and the directors and executives paid themselves enormous salaries and bonuses.

In 1999 John Robb retired with a whopping pension and a "new" Labour knighthood. He was replaced by Dr Robin Jeffery, who was paid nearly half a million pounds last year. Dr Jeffery is also chairman of Bruce Power, which came into existence in 2000 when British Energy bought two nuclear reactors from the government of Ontario, Canada. Jeffery was delighted at the deal, but Ontario's auditor, Erik Peters, wasn't. He reckoned it would cost Ontario taxpayers at least £69m. "In a nutshell," he concluded, "Ontario Power and the government as shareholder in Ontario Power have accepted lower tax flows and lower earnings for the taxpayer from the Bruce nuclear facilities." If British Energy could rip off the taxpayer in Britain, they could do so just as comprehensively in Canada.

More problems arose for British Energy when it bought and promptly sold the Welsh electricity firm, Swalec. Swalec had been contracted to buy expensive electricity from Enron's "Wakeham" plants in Teesside (so nicknamed because they were unctuously opened by the former Tory energy secretary John Wakeham). When British Energy sold Swalec, it was lumbered, as a condition of sale, with the Teesside contracts, and



Claire Spottiswoode



Ian Harley

as a result now owes Enron's receivers £349m. As the crisis for British Energy loomed, two new directors joined the board. Their experience is impressive. Claire Spottiswoode, a former government gas regulator, decided to join the ranks of the regulated when she became a senior director of Azurix, formerly Wessex Water, when the latter was taken over by, er, Enron. Ian Harley was chief executive of Abbey National bank. In the very month of his appointment to the British Energy board, he was obliged to leave the bank after months of criticism of its lamentable performance (which included at least £100m deposits in Enron).

Government ministers, meanwhile, had lost all their former distaste for energy privatisation. They enthusiastically endorsed a new "competitive" system of cutting charges for electricity called NETA. The nuclear industry, however, could not cut costs in step with NETA, and slid rapidly to disaster. When key and dependable City analysts said British Energy was doing fine, the company was obviously in desperate trouble.

Patricia Hewitt, secretary of state for trade and industry, assured the public there was to be "no blank cheque" for the bust company, and almost at once drew a cheque on the taxpayer for £410m to keep British Energy trading. This is obviously only the first tranche in what will certainly prove to be, well, a blank cheque.

JUST FANCY THAT!

ON 5 September in the US, the financial services committee of congress announced that it had demanded documents from two well-known firms as part of its investigation into conflicts of interest on Wall Street.

Of special interest to the committee was the doling out of "initial public offerings" from clients involved in the doomed telecoms boom and the firms' analysts. One of the firms ordered to hand over documents was Credit Suisse First Boston.

On 5 September in Britain, meanwhile, the department of trade and industry announced the appointment of yet another paid adviser on a financial matter: how to save British Energy from going bust. The name of the adviser? Credit Suisse First Boston.

HANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

THE ghost of Enron still haunts Britain's power supply.

Enron's "liberated" trading in "virtual" gas supply has left British firms like Centrica, BP, RWE and London Electricity with debts of about £2bn. This sort of thing obviously can never happen again, especially since the industry regulator, OFGEM, has appointed a brand new regulator as head of gas trading.

Step forward Kyran Hanks, who after 1988 was head of European regulatory affairs at, er, Enron. He was a delegate at the 2000 Gas Regulatory Forum in Madrid, and even had a seat on the advisory council to the water regulator, OFWAT.

ALL THEY NEED IS LOVE

ANOTHER sign of Labour's anxiety to please the big privatised industries it once denounced is the recent agreement by the government to take responsibility for third party insurance in the event of a terrorist attack.

Anne Lambert, head of the government's nuclear liabilities directorate, told a Commons committee on 9 July that as result of the 11 September terrorist attacks last year, British Nuclear Insurers decided to withdraw cover for third party claims arising from acts of terrorism. The government, therefore, had "no alternative" but to take over responsibility for such insurance.

This mix of private ownership of the profitable parts of industry and public responsibility for the unprofitable parts is becoming fashionable. When the "new" Labour government decided to privatise its Defence, Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA), the new company, grotesquely called Qinetiq, refused to take responsibility for any environmental liabilities.

The ministry of defence responded by offering a 20-year indemnity for any environmental losses sustained by the company. A handful of Labour MPs, led by Llew Smith, objected; but, just as MPs left for their summer holidays, the government went ahead with the guarantee. Mr Smith and 18 other MPs signed an early-day motion criticising the move, demanding a withdrawal of the guarantee and insisting that the secretary of state say how much public money he may have to spend on his pledge. Whether the business friendly defence secretary Geoff Hoon will respond to this demand is not clear.

Freed so generously from so many liabilities, the directors of Qinetiq can get on with the business they are already experts in – making money for themselves and their new owner, the prestigious Carlyle group, whose chairman is former British prime minister John Major.

The chief finance officer of Qinetiq is Graham Love, a close friend of chairman Sir John Chisholm (they spend many happy hours together racing classic Jags). When the first part of DERA was privatised way back in 1997, Love led the management buy-out and duly became the boss of a new military support services firm called Comax. In a terrific splurge for shareholders and directors, Comax was sold on again to Amey in 1999. Love and his colleague John Braddel cleared a cool million each. Now they are back for more. John Braddel is Qinetiq's estates developer. The *Eye* asked the MoD if Love's appointment might lead to bigger bonuses and share options not all of which were of immediate benefit to the public. A spokesman explained: "Managers and staff should be incentivised as part of the deal."

FOLLOW-UP...

■ **CAFCASS:** The children and family courts advisory service is still in a mess, despite lord chancellor Lord Irvine's promise to sort it out.

Many vulnerable children are still waiting for specialist guardians to be appointed to represent them in court or care proceedings. In one case involving social services in the West Country, a baby boy known to be at risk died after being returned to his parent under a court supervision order before a guardian had been appointed.

In London the waiting list has fallen from 180 to 150, but insiders suggest it is rising again as it is elsewhere.

The only good news is that Cafcass has finally taken Diane Shepherd, former chief executive, off the pay-roll after nearly a year's gardening leave. And it has found a replacement for experienced child-care judge Nigel Fricker, who resigned from the board because of the mess. His replacement is Daniel Bernstein, non-executive chair of Monarch Airlines, non-executive director of NATS – the disastrously part-privatised air traffic control service – and a former president of the International Air Carriers Association. His knowledge of the air industry will be invaluable to vulnerable children and the courts.

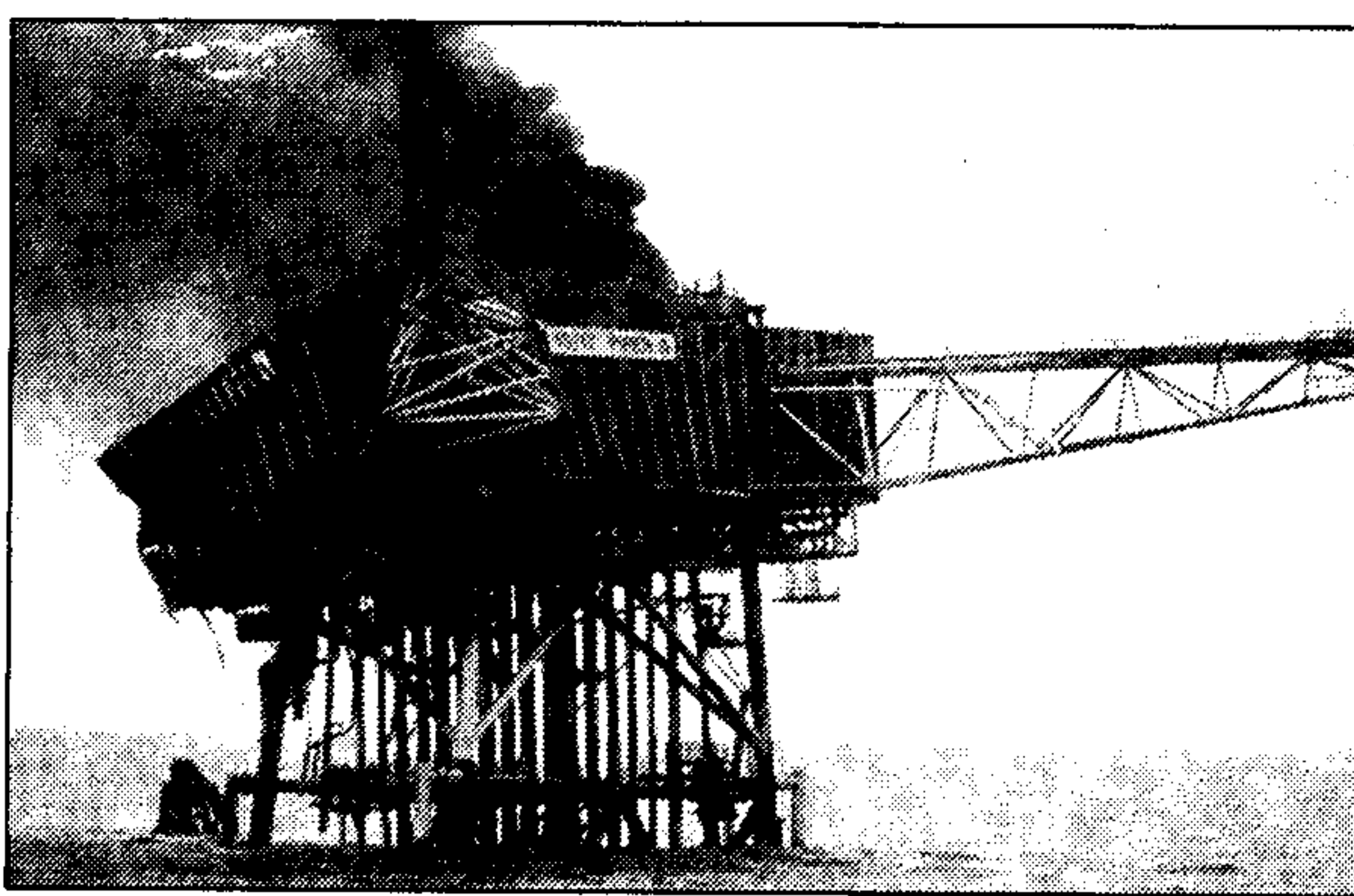
SHIPS FOR THE CHOPPER?

OIL giant BP has come up with an exciting way to cut costs in the North Sea. It plans to supply helicopters to do the work of the much more expensive stand-by ships that provide a means of escape for rig workers in the event of a fire or other threat to safety.

The importance of these stand-by vessels was emphasised in the Cullen report on the 1988 Piper Alpha oil rig (see right) disaster in which 170 people died. Sixty one survivors were plucked from the sea by stand-by ships, none by helicopter. The extent of the explosions and the fire were far too great for helicopters to save anyone. Lord Cullen devoted a large slice of his report to the need to reequip stand-by vessels and increase their number. He made the commonsense point that although helicopters are the swiftest means of evacuation from rigs, they cannot operate in most disasters.

In the old days, any health and safety proposals by companies were "declared" and could be openly debated. In 1995, however, the Tories introduced new laws to usher in a "permissioning" regime. This leaves it open to the companies to make proposals for changes to health and safety regulations. These proposals are confidential, and cannot be revealed or publicly debated.

The idea of ditching the stand-by ships is vigorously opposed by NUMAST, the trade union



to which most of the thousands of stand-by ship workers belong. NUMAST knows that BP wants to change the system and switch to helicopters, because BP has told some of its workers about it. The union leaders say the proposals are a serious threat to the safety of workers on the rigs. But they cannot find out the detail of BP's proposals – or the arguments for them – because they are confidential.

Alan Graveson, NUMAST national secretary, points out that the rules restricting the information are included in a government document entitled "Open Government – code of practice on access to government information". Despite constant lobbying by the union, the Tory regulations protecting the big companies have not been changed by "new" Labour. The fact that Lord Simon, chairman of BP, was a senior minister in the first "new" Labour government (or that Tony Blair's former top adviser Angie Hunter now works for BP) is irrelevant.

PRISON WORKS (FOR SOME)

WILL Britain's private prisons become a near monopoly as Group 4 takes over the sinister security firm Wackenhut? That's the danger being investigated by the competition commission, which will report on the take-over later this month.

Thankfully the commission has just the man to make sure the home office and treasury aren't put over a barrel by the prison privatisers, however. For chairing the inquiry is one Jeremy Seddon, who between 1987 and 1995 was head of the privatisation and government advisory unit of Barclays Bank's investment arm, BZW.

Incredibly, the commission suggested last month that there could be simple "behavioural remedies" to any potential competition problems. This means Group 4 could merely write a letter to the govern-

ment promising that it would not abuse its position. The commission suggested that while Group 4 will own Wackenhut, it could promise to "demonstrate publicly the independence of, and the competition between, Premier and the remainder of Group 4 in bidding for contracts". The commission suggests this even though Group 4 has already promised "structural remedies" – ie selling off Wackenhut's UK prison privatisation business to a third party.

Funnily enough BZW, now known as Barclays Capital, is a "partner" of Group 4. But the commission has reassured the *Eye*: "Mr Seddon has confirmed to the commission that during all his time with Barclays he had no knowledge of any connection between BZW/Barclays and the parties to the inquiry and that he was not directly involved in any transaction involving either company." So that's all right, then.

... FOLLOW-UP

■ **IMMIGRATION:** More on Jacob Moyo, the Zimbabwean immigration "adviser" who's made a lot of money cheating hapless asylum seekers. Undeterred by the threat of legal action and being suspended by the immigration authorities, Moyo has reinvented himself as an employment and mortgage adviser.

London police have also been called in following allegations that Moyo has been refusing to return former clients' passports – and that he has been continuing to charge for immigration advice after he was suspended.

His new operation, New Services incorporating JSM consultancy (sic) services, is touting for trade among Zimbabweans and others, telling them it is their responsibility to find work and accommodation and not be dependent on the state. "We have applied for licences which should enable us to recruit people and place them in employment," he writes, adding: "We have successfully negotiated arrangements for the provision of mortgage finance for the purchase of immovable property, such as a house in the UK."

As the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) made clear when it struck him off, when Moyo arrived in the UK in 1998 he himself was only allowed to stay for six months and had no rights to reside or work. The former master of Zimbabwe's high court is now claiming asylum, saying he was threatened after refusing to comply in corrupt government dealings at home. The Zimbabwe authorities say he was sacked for dishonesty and abuse of power.

■ **PRISONS:** Service boss Martin Narey has been rewarded for taking the flak over Britain's overcrowded penal dustbins by securing an unprecedented promotion to second permanent secretary to the home office.

This is the same Martin Narey who last year threatened to resign because he was no longer prepared to keep apologising for Britain's "hell-hole" jails, where bullying, drugs, racism, suicide and self harm were endemic.

One hell-hole was Wormwood Scrubs, targeted for radical reform after its culture of brutality was exposed. According to Anne Owers, chief inspector of prisons, not much has changed at the west London jail. "On all four of our key tests Wormwood Scrubs was less healthy, or at best no healthier, than it had been 22 months earlier," she said. Far from resigning, Narey robustly defended the jail, saying Owers was wrong.

KOPPEL CRUMBLE

THE future of Wimbledon Football Club still depends on the fantastic plans of its chairman, Charles Koppel, to transport the club to Milton Keynes where he plans to build a new stadium holding 28,000 people (see *Eye* 1054).

The plans have infuriated loyal supporters, who have voted with their feet and transferred their support to a new football club, AFC Wimbledon, which plays in the Combined Counties league, ranked at level 8 in the English football pyramid, six leagues lower than the first division, where Wimbledon FC still plays.

The fans' boycott of their club in protest at the proposed move has been astonishingly successful. The attendance at AFC Wimbledon matches in the Combined Counties league has been far higher than the attendance at the boycotted

professional first division club. The ground at Kingston, where the new club plays, sold out its first game to more than 4,000 fans, with 1,000 turned away, while, even away from their new home, Wimbledon crowds still turn up at the most unlikely places. At the tiny ground at Sandhurst recently, 2,500 fans turned up to cheer on AFC Wimbledon, standing three deep on the touchline. The usual crowd at Sandhurst seldom exceeds 100.

All this bodes ill for Mr Koppel and his plans for Milton Keynes. Worse news for Koppel and Co comes from the accounts for 2001, published too late to be considered by the Football Association which was considering its reaction to the move. The auditors signed off the accounts with the following not entirely confident message: "In forming our opinion we have considered the

adequacy of the disclosures made in the financial statements concerning the anticipated improved trading position of the club following its proposed move to Milton Keynes... Whilst we understand that a detailed feasibility study including budgets and cash flow forecasts is to be prepared in the near future, the evidence was not available to us in time to complete our audit and whilst the directors have been reassured as to the continuing support of the majority shareholder evidenced by its continuing funding we ourselves have not had any confirmation of this."

There is still no feasibility study for the proposed new stadium, and the evidence mounts that the real reason for the proposed move has nothing to do with football but a lot to do with what Milton Keynes council calls the "huge investment project" of developing playing fields

outside the town centre. Such a development would be impossible without the football stadium, which would help secure planning permission for a Media Centre, a 150,000 sq ft Asda Wal-Mart food store, a vast new shop for IKEA, not to mention a hotel and fitness club.

Wimbledon fans don't really understand why they should help provide the pretext for such profitable property and retail development, which is why they are staying away from their club in droves. Meanwhile Mr Koppel's reaction to the fans demands for a return to the club's former ground at Plough Lane was to try to mobilise a few local residents into support for the Milton Keynes extravagance. A press statement by these residents rather lost its impact when all media inquiries were referred to Brunswick Public Relations, the PR firm employed by Mr Koppel.



In the City

THE Serious Farce Office and assorted magistrates in Switzerland and Italy have developed a growing interest in a London-based Italian lawyer with impressive business connections and a £40m mystery surrounding a little known offshore bank.

The lawyer is Onofrio Russo, jailed last year for contempt of court in relation to his business activities. These include a Caribbean brass plate bank which appears to have closed owing depositors the £40m; and a Jersey trust which features in a major Italian fraud and money laundering probe.

Russo once drove a sports car at Le Mans and had a high octane lifestyle. He lived at an expensive address in Hampstead. That was until last year when he was sentenced to two years and relocated to HMP Pentonville.

Russo's problems have caused embarrassment to two of his better known business associates: Peter Shalson, the man who made millions out of plastic hangers; and the hyperactive property-dealing Tchenguiz brothers. While not targets of the criminal investigations, both have inadvertently been caught up in Russo's problems.

Most of these seem to revolve around the Westbond International Bank of Antigua which, while registered in the Caribbean, is understood to have operated as a deposit taker via an account with the PKB Privatbank in Lugano. Westbond attracted deposits the old fashioned way – by offering high interest returns. Its current status is unclear; but it is believed to have closed. However, none of the depositors appears to have rushed to complain to the authorities. The closure is understood to have been triggered by a demand for repayment by one of the largest depositors.

Westbond was the biggest creditor – £600,000 – of the Tchenguiz-controlled Consolidated Finance which was wound up earlier this year. Another creditor was PKB PrivatBank. Robert Tchenguiz was a director of Consolidated Finance. Russo was a director of two companies with which Consolidated Finance did business.

Until last year Russo had been a director of another Tchenguiz-linked company, fund manager Seccom. Vincent Tchenguiz was a Seccom director before Russo arrived in 1997. However, Seccom continues to be part owned by Tchenguiz family trusts.

With brother Robert, Vincent Tchenguiz runs the Iranian born family's Rotch Property Group which has assets of more than £500m. Rotch has become a major player in the London property market in recent years using complex financing structures which have often puzzled City observers.

Another investor in Seccom was the Jersey-based Brookscastle settlement which Italian investigators have linked to Russo.

Multi-millionaire Peter Shalson attracted

publicity last year when he threw a reputed £5m bash that featured Elton John as the star turn to celebrate his wedding. Shalson made a £50m fortune when he sold control of his plastic coat hanger and packaging group Braitrim. Russo was a co-director with Shalson of Seatribe a property trading company. Both made loans of £5m to the company. The company was dissolved last month.



Neither Shalson nor the Tchenguiz brothers are suspected of any wrongdoing in their dealings with Russo.

The SFO is understood to have entered the Russo affair as a result of requests for assistance from magistrates in Naples and Bolzano in Italy as well as in Lugano, Switzerland. It has not launched any investigation of its own.

The Italian investigation relates to the collapse of the major grain trader Italgrani in 1999 and the subsequent investigation into Naples' "king of grain", Franco Ambrosio and his associates. Italgrani had debts of more than £250m. Ambrosio had previously faced charges of corruption in the widespread "Clean Hands" investigations of businessmen during the mid-90s. Ambrosio was arrested in January 2001 on charges of bankruptcy fraud.

The Naples magistrates accuse Ambrosio and his associates of transferring millions abroad from Italgrani into tax haven companies and bank accounts. Magistrates in Bolzano are investigating financier Donato Iannece's role in these money transfers.

The Italian investigation uncovered the role of Brookscastle Investments, a Jersey company linked to the trust of the same name, and Russo in offshore transactions involving the Italgrani millions. Money was said to have been transferred to accounts at Barclays controlled by Russo.

The SFO and the home office are now considering the Italian request which has since been joined by a further separate request from the Swiss authorities relating to the Westbond bank. Meanwhile civil actions have been started in Jersey by certain of the bank's depositors.

VETERAN conman Alan Shephard continues to occupy the courts with his advance fee pillaging despite claims of penury made from his mansion in Virginia, all supposedly paid for by his

wealthy but now, he says, seriously ill wife.

Shephard was responsible for the demise of City grandee Sir Michael Richardson and embroiled former Tory Party chairman Sir Edward du Cann in another action in which judgment has been obtained against Shephard and his wife for \$1.4m. A claim against du Cann was dropped.

The latest example of Shephard's fraudulent activity with his company Puffin Investment concerns a high court action brought by two of his most recent victims, Mohammed Ansari and St Philip Land plus Geoffrey Kenshole against Shephard and his associate, Hans Wilof. Both had been promised \$10m loans in 2000 by Shephard in return for up front fees of \$150,000 and \$200,000 respectively. The money was handed over but as ever no loans materialised and as ever the supposedly refundable fees were not repaid.

The victims sued in November 2001 and have obtained judgment by default against the twice bankrupted Shephard and Puffin for deceit and conspiracy. Wilof appealed the judgment against him for \$350,000.

Wilof maintained Puffin had substantial funds at its disposal from Lausanne-based Omni Commerce.

This was a typical Shephard fiction – as made clear in the judgment last May by Mr Justice Burton, who upheld the verdict against Wilof, Puffin's self-described European director.

"There is no evidence that Puffin ever had, certainly at the material time, any funds... there is no evidence that Omni ever supplied Puffin with any funds," declared the judge. "Puffin, whether through Omni or otherwise, did not, withstanding constant promises, supply any funds... nor did it refund the arrangement fee... There is no track record of provision of funds previously or indeed subsequently by Puffin". The judge highlighted that neither Shephard or Puffin had produced any evidence of their ability to find loans. What a surprise!

What was produced was a letter from the Berliner Bank denying that it had offered a \$500m credit line to Omni – as Shephard claimed. Omni, according to Wilof, was being run by Shephard.

Mr Justice Burton also referred to the fact that Shephard and Wilof had scammed \$300,000 in May 2000 from a company called Trans-American Projects by promising them a \$30m loan from Puffin International in Gibraltar. No funds were forthcoming; but after threat of legal action the \$300,000 was repaid – a rare occurrence. There are two other Puffin Investments in the Bahamas and Delaware.

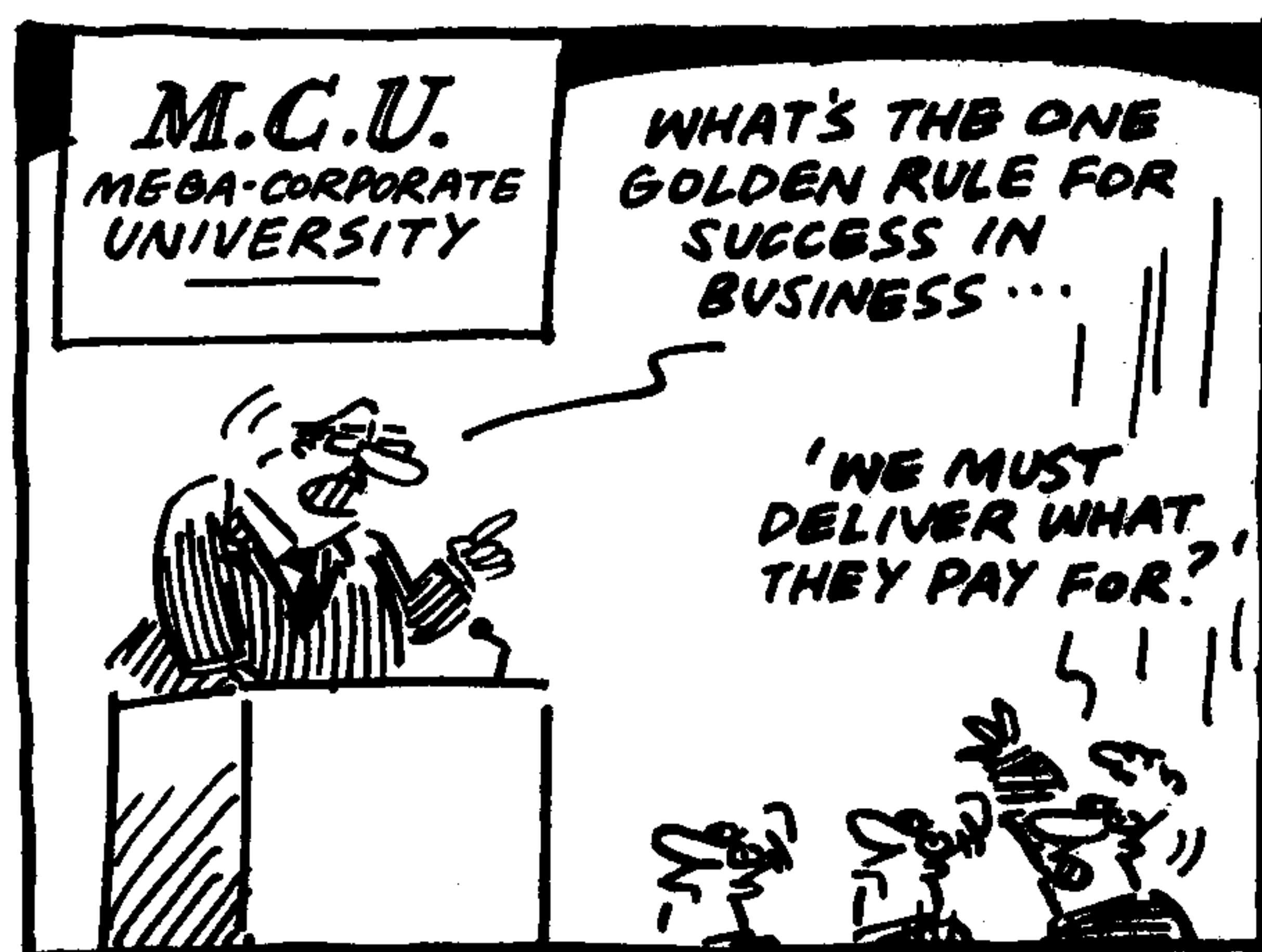
Large sums had been paid by Puffin Gibraltar during 2000 not to any lenders but to companies linked to Wilof and others via two Gibraltar companies, Wyburn Property and Chloris. Wyburn received \$125,000 while Chloris received \$430,000. Chloris in turn paid over more than \$250,000 to Wyburn, Wilof and his solicitors.

Not surprisingly the judge ordered that Wilof must pay \$375,000 into court to avoid judgment by default.

Meanwhile Shephard sits in his Virginia mansion undisturbed by law enforcement agencies and relying on the time and difficulty for creditors seeking to enforce their UK judgments against him.

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG



Stock Horror

John Major's Revenge

Shareholders' losses on his final two privatisations...

Railtrack

- £440m

British Energy

- £1,200m

FOLLOWERS of white collar crime were amused to see that Peters & Peters, those renowned defenders of the wrongly accused and hammers of the police and the SFO, have found a client who is actually a victim of somebody else's crime. They are acting in what is probably the biggest ever "419"-style advance fee fraud perpetrated by Nigeria's endless happy band of merry fraudsters.

This time the victim was not defrauded by letter or email, the usual come-on. Instead the victim is the Banco Noroeste from Brazil, which parted with no less than \$242m to a crew of expert Nigerian conmen lead by two men posing as the governor and deputy governor of the central bank.

A Banco Noroeste director was lured into paying this huge sum over three years from 1994 by promises of a big fee from funding the building of a new airport. In true "419" style, the Brazilian bank director continued to make payments for mythical fees and taxes in an effort to collect the promised sum.

Since 1997 the bank has been in pursuit of the money, \$40m of which passed into accounts at Barclays in London. Peters & Peters has been assisting in the hunt. Sadly that means that should any of the Nigerians responsible be arrested in Britain they will presumably be unable to call upon the skills of those stout defenders of such obviously innocent defendants as Kevin Maxwell and Peter, aka Elizabeth, Young.

VICTIMS of the £200m Imperial Consolidated fraud are now being offered the same bait and switch deal regularly employed by the "bucket shop" share promoters - sorry you lost your money: here's a way of getting it back by investing in this new venture. Of course the new venture is run by those who stole the money in the first place. Who else has the "sucker list" of victims?

IC Mutual investors have been circulated with an offer from a Robert Kirby in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, offering a switch into the Property International Fund in return for a new investment. Strangely, to take up this kind offer you need to respond to a fax address in Spain. This is understood to be the office of Rob Raven, who, like Kirby, used to work as a salesman for... yes, Imperial Consolidated.

The carrot for those stupid enough to accept this offer is a 16 percent return on their money. A return likely to be paid out of their own or other investors' money as in Imperial.

The Property International Fund claims to control assets of more than \$300m. How much of that is real and how much if real was siphoned out of Imperial is a matter for investigation. Administrators Mazars Neville Russell are looking for more than £150m of Imperial money which was supposedly loaned to a company involved in mining in Argentina. That company was controlled by the two prime suspects, Jared Brook and Lincoln Fraser, the banned directors now represented by lawyers Pinsent Curtis Biddle. Both their assets were frozen last month.

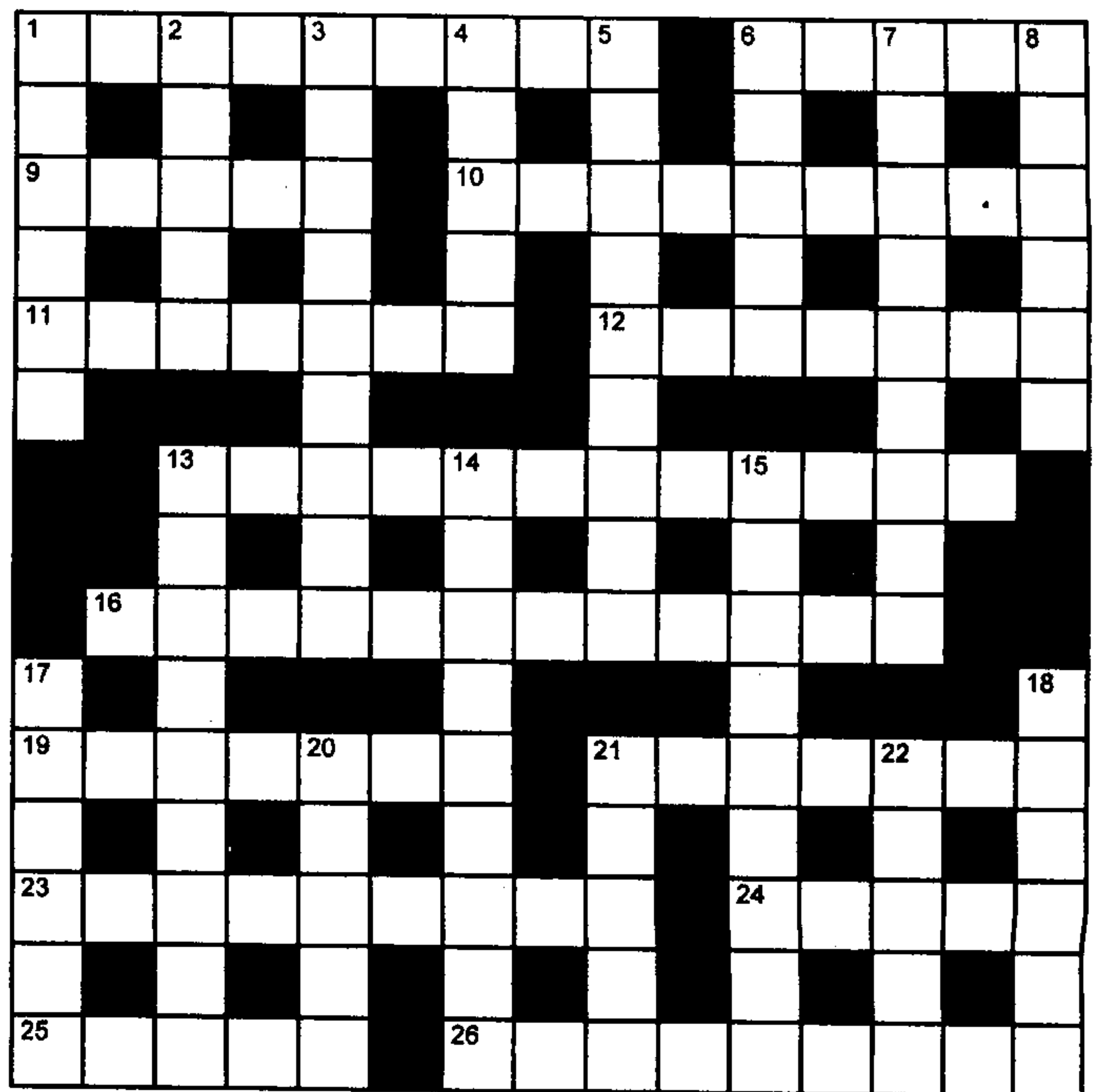
The asset freeze followed the discovery by Mazars that the around £1m proceeds from the sale of a private aircraft Brook and Fraser had said was not airworthy had been flown to the United States and sold.

'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 218 by Cyclops

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or via email to
crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

- 1 What Dubya stands for: getting measure raised in good shape (4-5)
- 6 Feelings rendered by 'no refuge' Blair in contests (5)
- 9 Muslim title, 3 for example (5)
- 10 Things to pin on leaderless countries (9)
- 11 Widdecombe's last politician to take slip right off for a leader (7)
- 12 Free loader married for rank and title (7)
- 13/21ac. Bush's would-be statesman-like act and, looked at another way, the rest of the world's response? (12,7)
- 16 Flower stuck on old bowler, being a tedious politician? (7,5)
- 19 Extremist's blow job appliance with "acceleration and jerk" (7)
- 21 See 13ac.
- 23 Right one getting back into kinky onanism here (3,6)
- 24 Me, pretentious, girl? *Au contraire*, in a manner of speaking (5)
- 25 Probes balls when ecstasy is lacking (5)
- 26 Putting corporation on e-trail is getting hard (9)

DOWN

- 1 Digitally-connected part of Internet shag (6)
- 2 Member gets high as aid to getting on (3-2)
- 3 Arse about making loaf (3,6)
- 4 Be presumptuous, outspoken, ermined (5)
- 5 Paid employee's allowance put strain on massage parlour business (3,6)
- 6 The Vicar is about to shove it up one who got him where he is? (5)
- 7 Gore, prior to dip and messy defeat (5-4)
- 8 "The end of Uncle Sam" - consumed by Saddam's top energy plant (6)
- 13 Firstly, Camilla is wrong, wrong about Brian's ultimate character ("the makings of a king") (9)
- 14 "Party's burial place," heard recruit (9)
- 15 House members ground joints (9)
- 17 Neutralise dodgy fix (6)
- 18 Let's give a wave to sex (6)
- 20 Idiots getting Tony's first minister promoted right off (5)
- 21 Remove fleas from partner's jumper in flipping car (5)
- 22 Some unsavouriness as a result of member's leak (5)

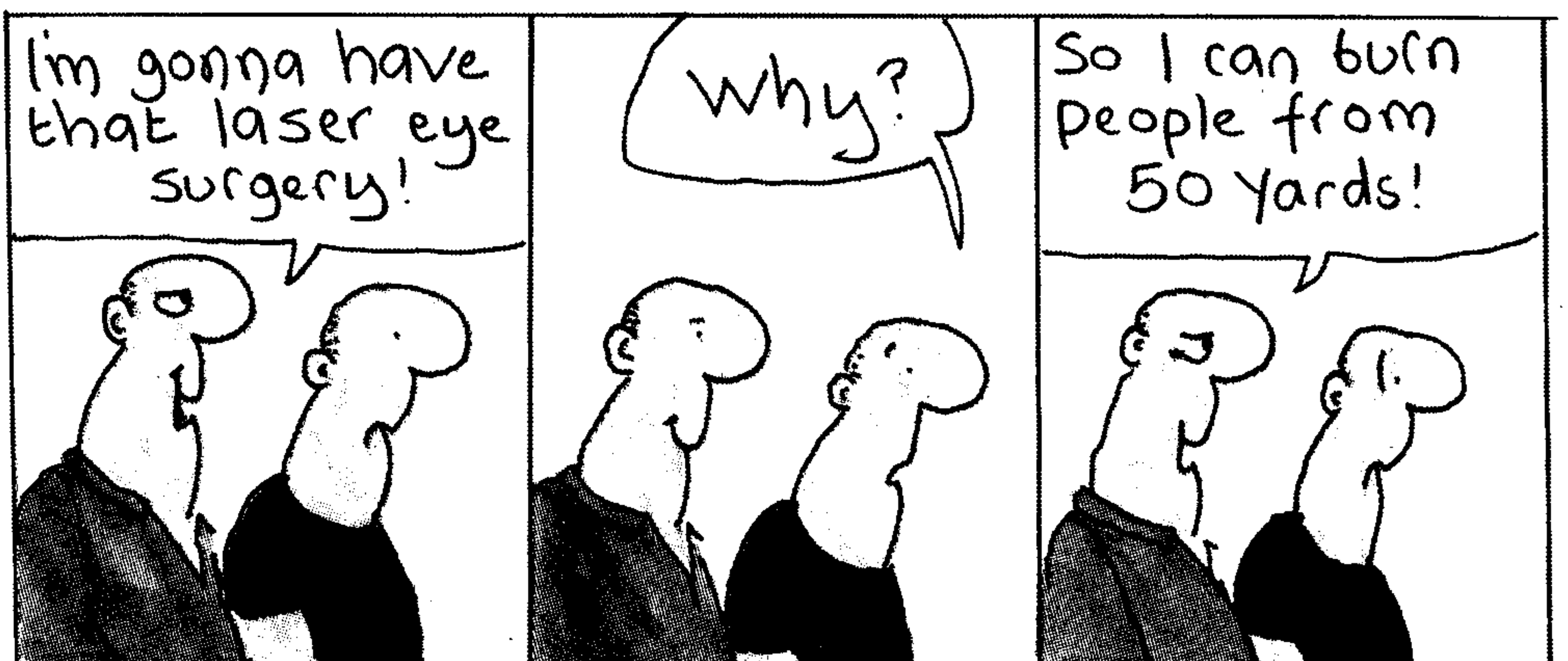
Crossword 217 winner: P. MIZON

ACROSS: 1/5 A Pain in the arse 9 Detox 10 Bound over 11 Screwed up 12 Trump 13 Boxers 14 Unamused 17 Gonadial 19 Odious 22 Epsom 24 Schmaltzy 26 Overblown 27 Yemen 28 Fatigue 29 Thermos.

DOWN: 1 Aides 2 Anthrax 3 Next world 4 Nobody 5 Thumping 6 End it 7 Rave-ups 8 Euripides 13 Bugger off 15 Media hype 16 Gas stove 18 No sweat 20 Optimum 21 Why not 23 Mr Big 25 Yanks.



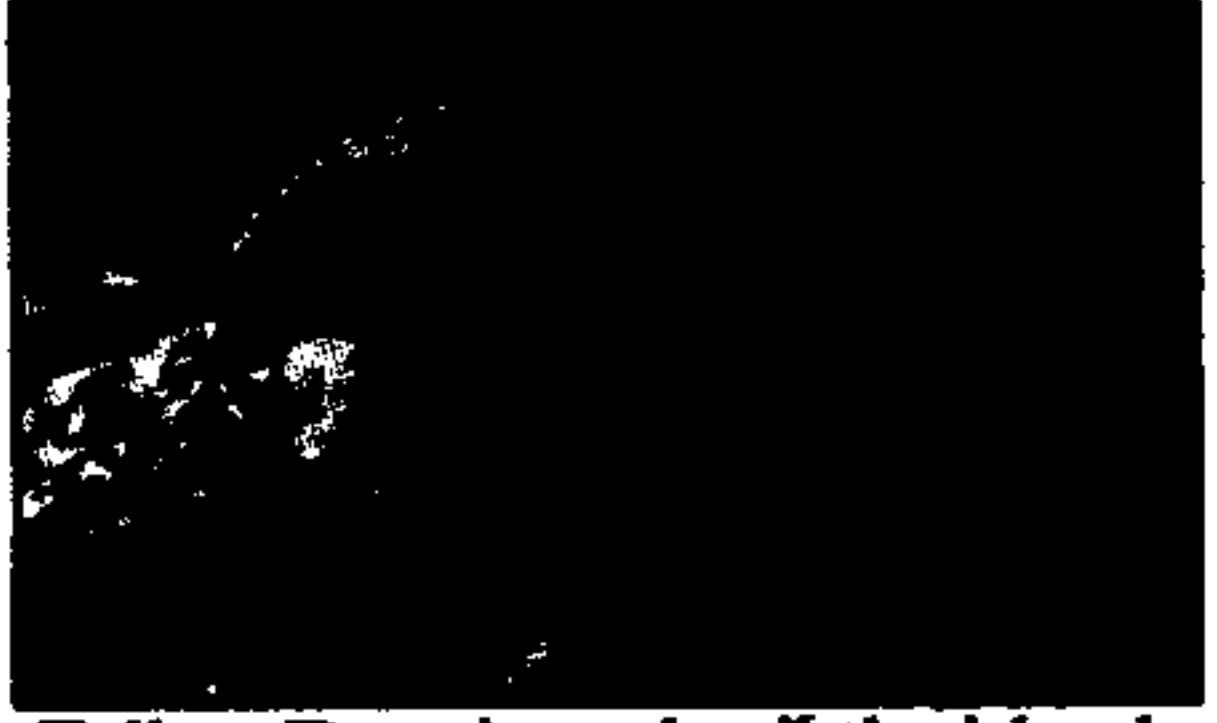
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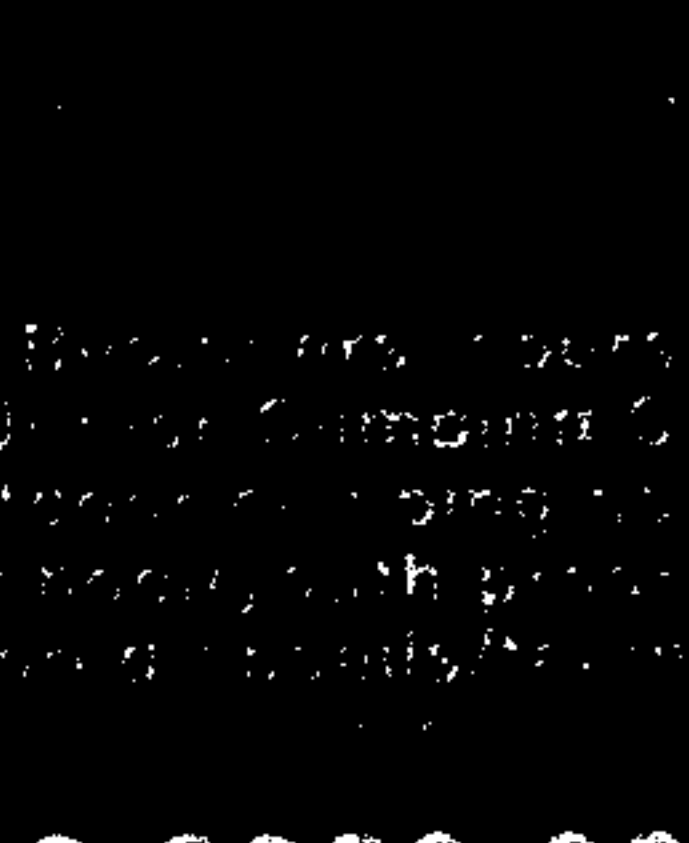
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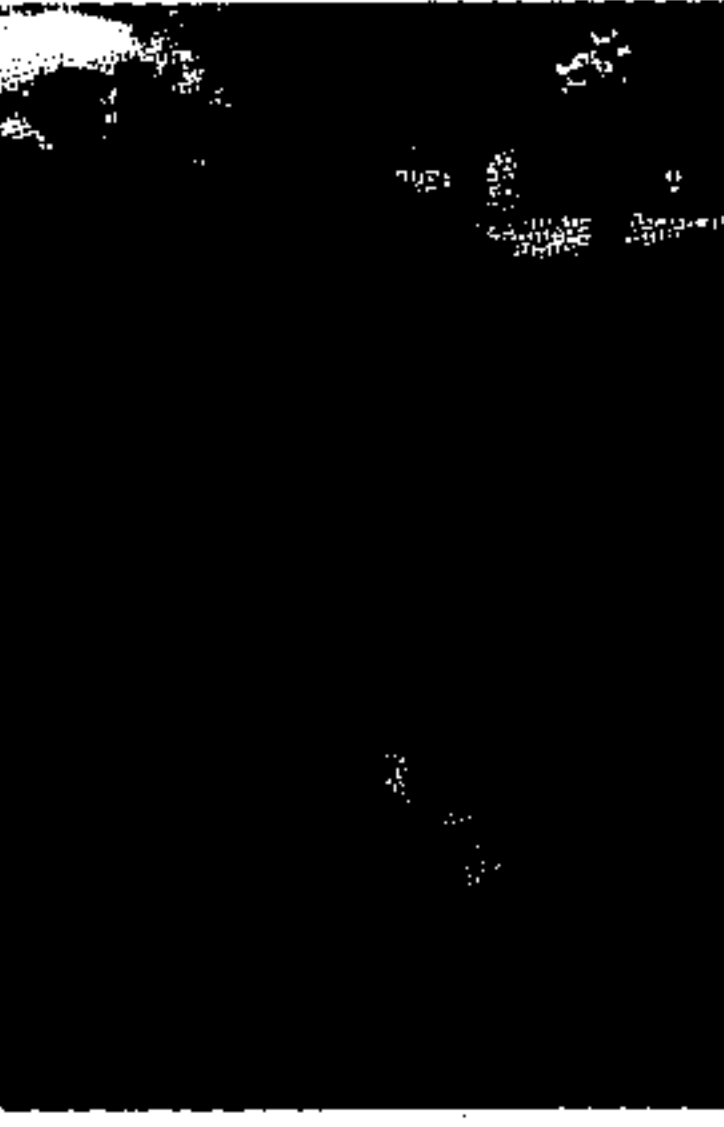
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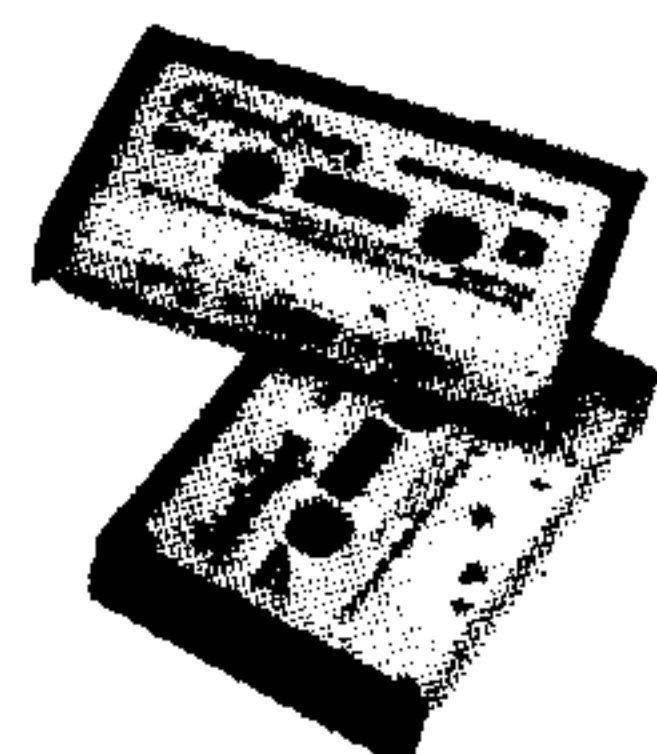
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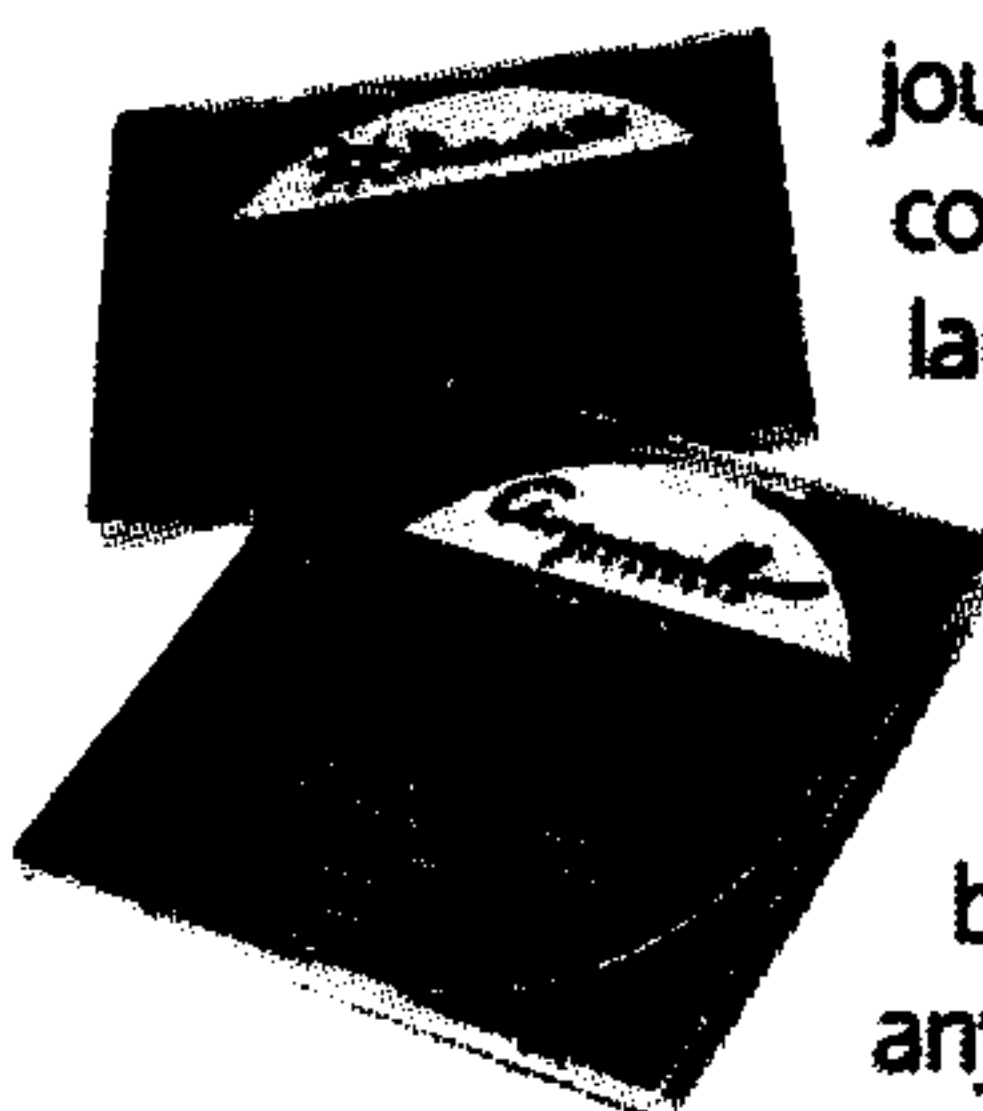
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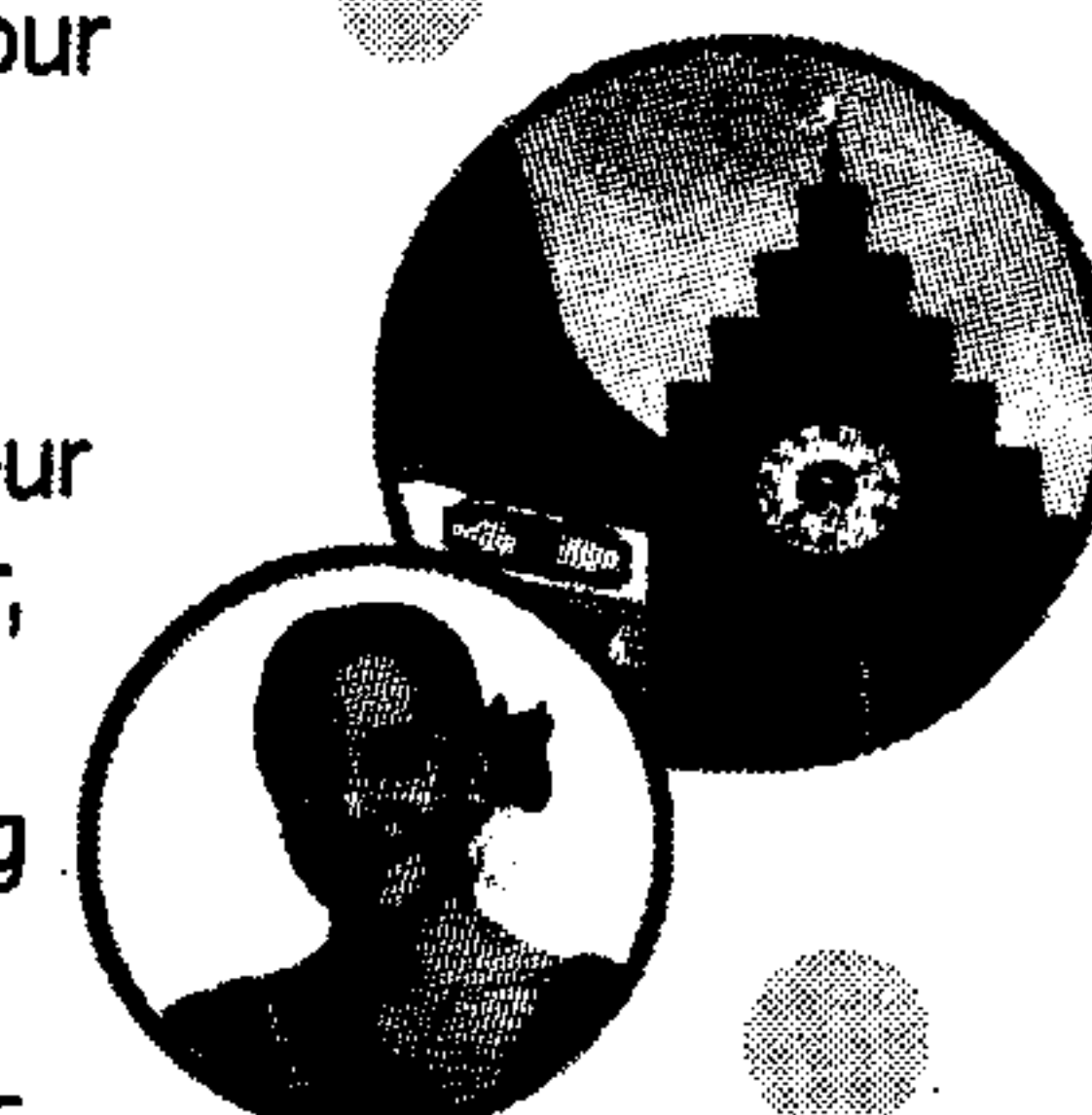
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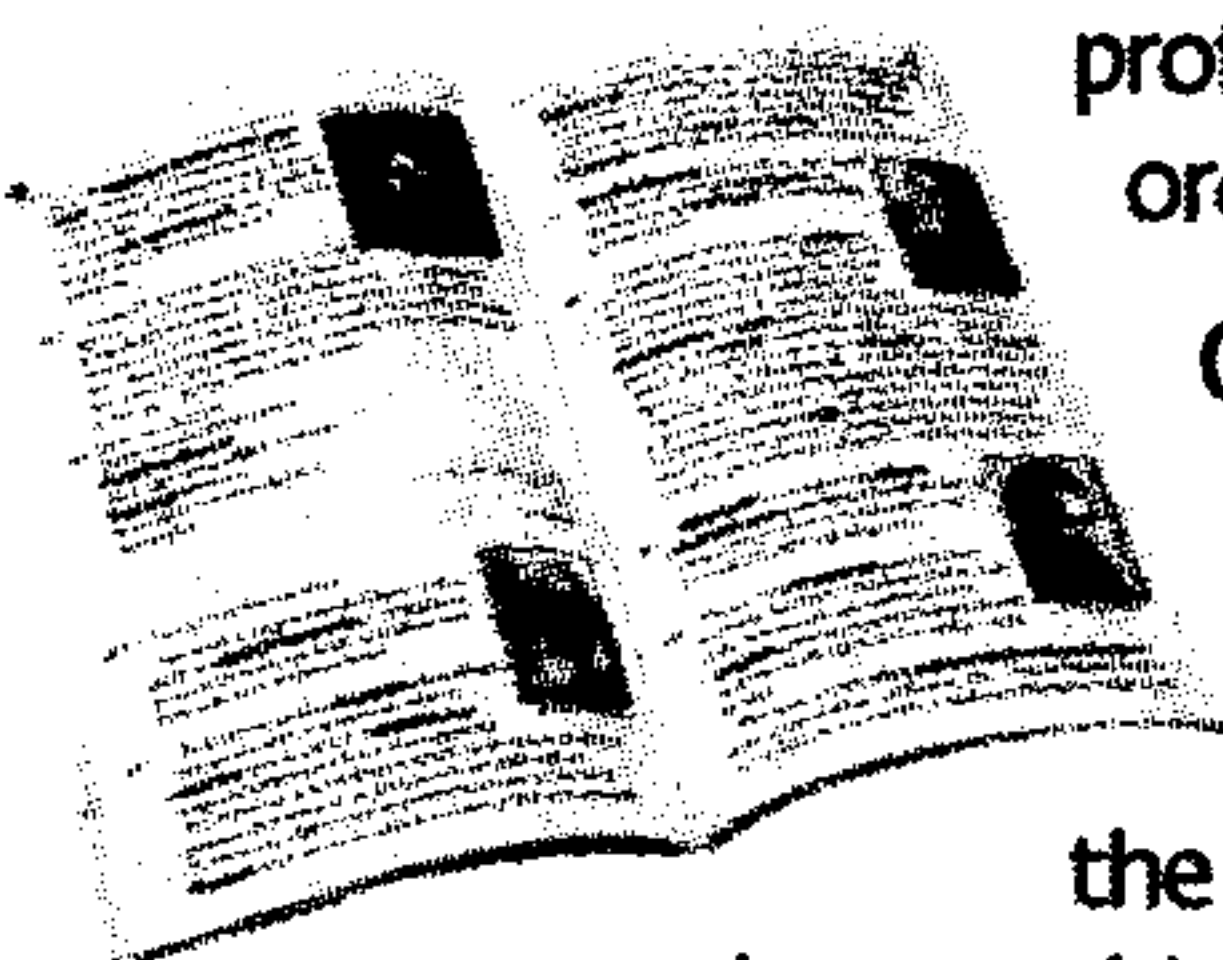
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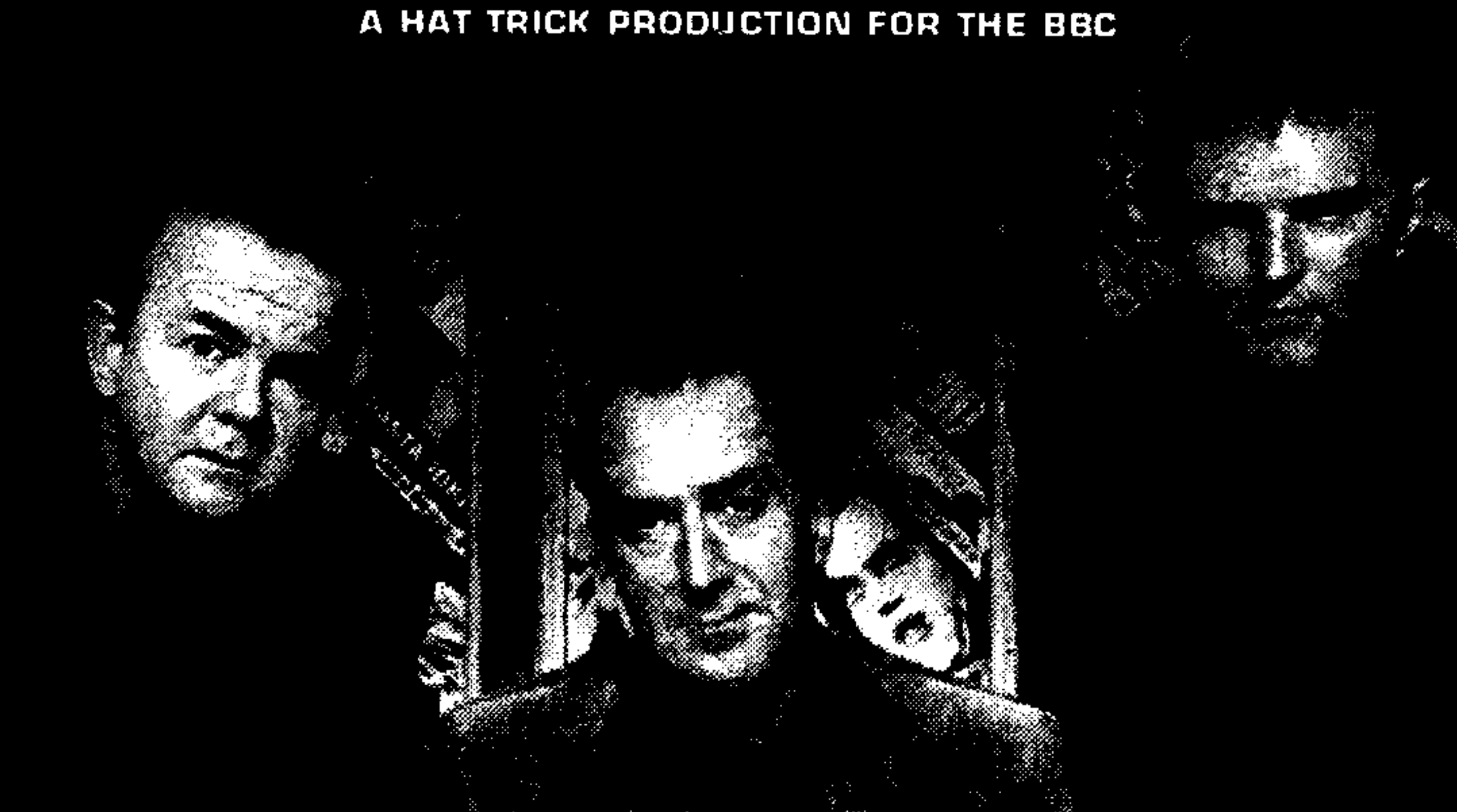
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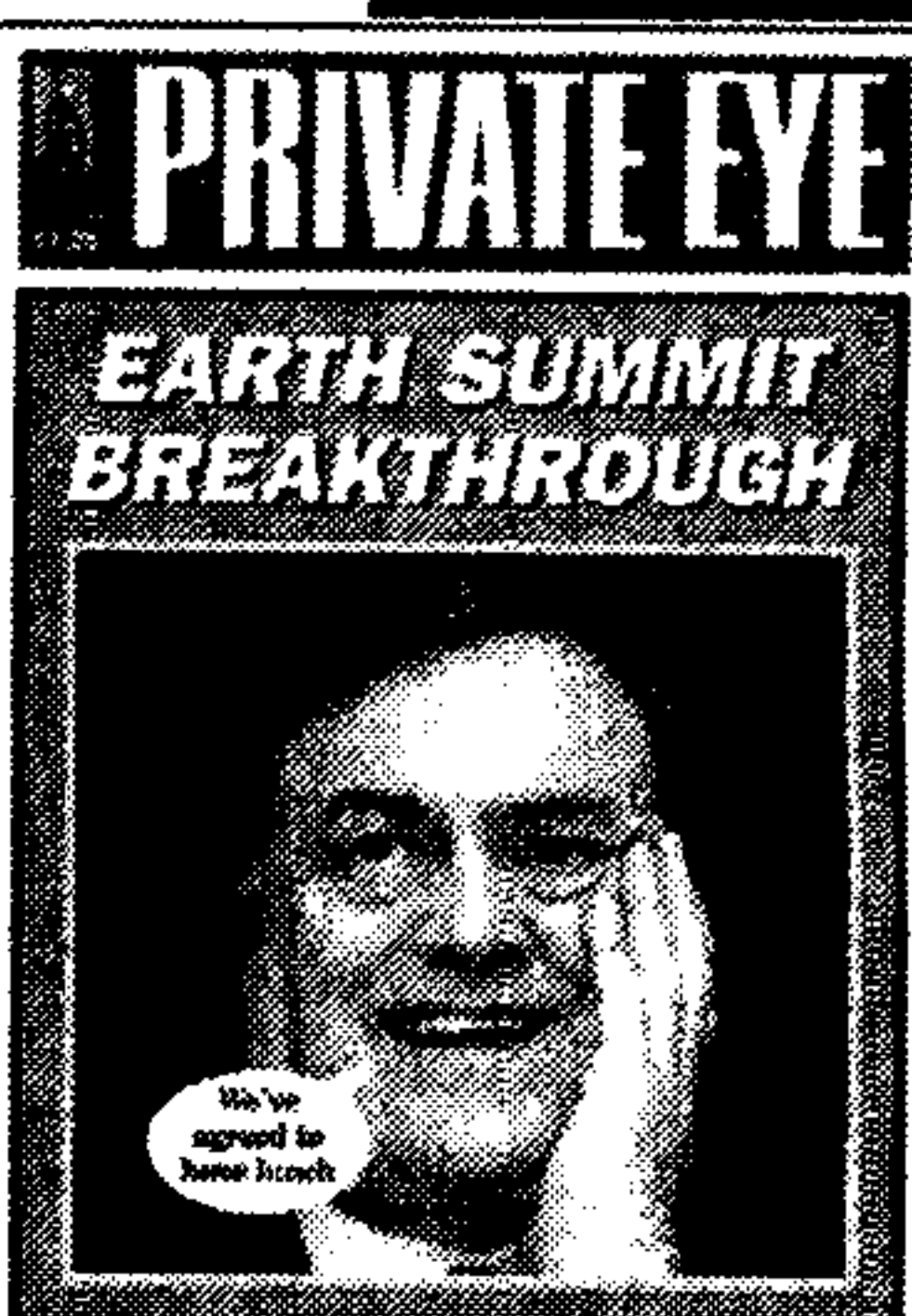
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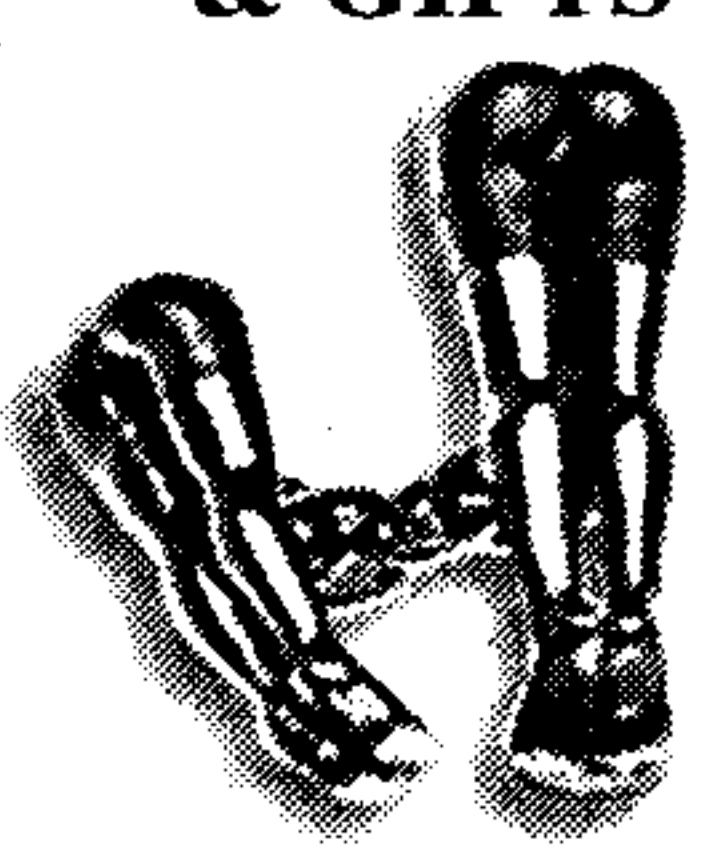
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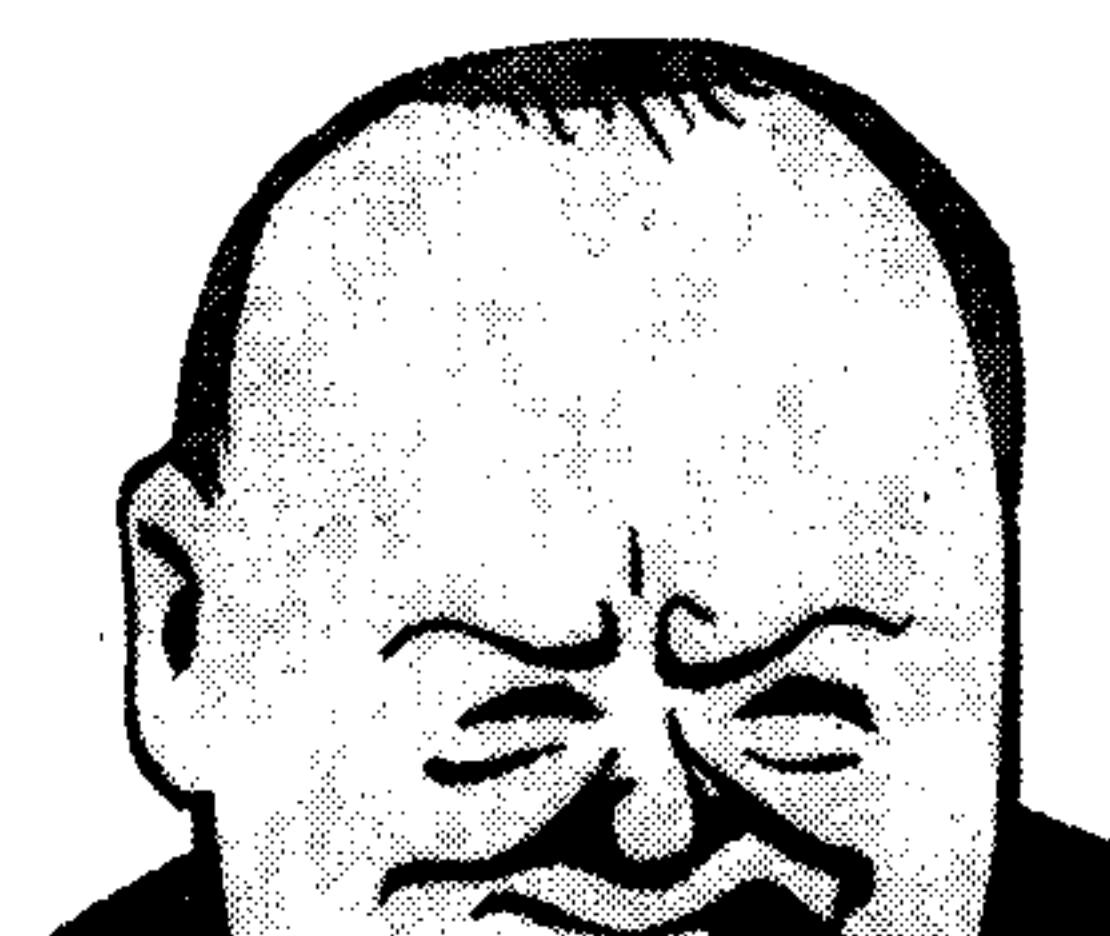


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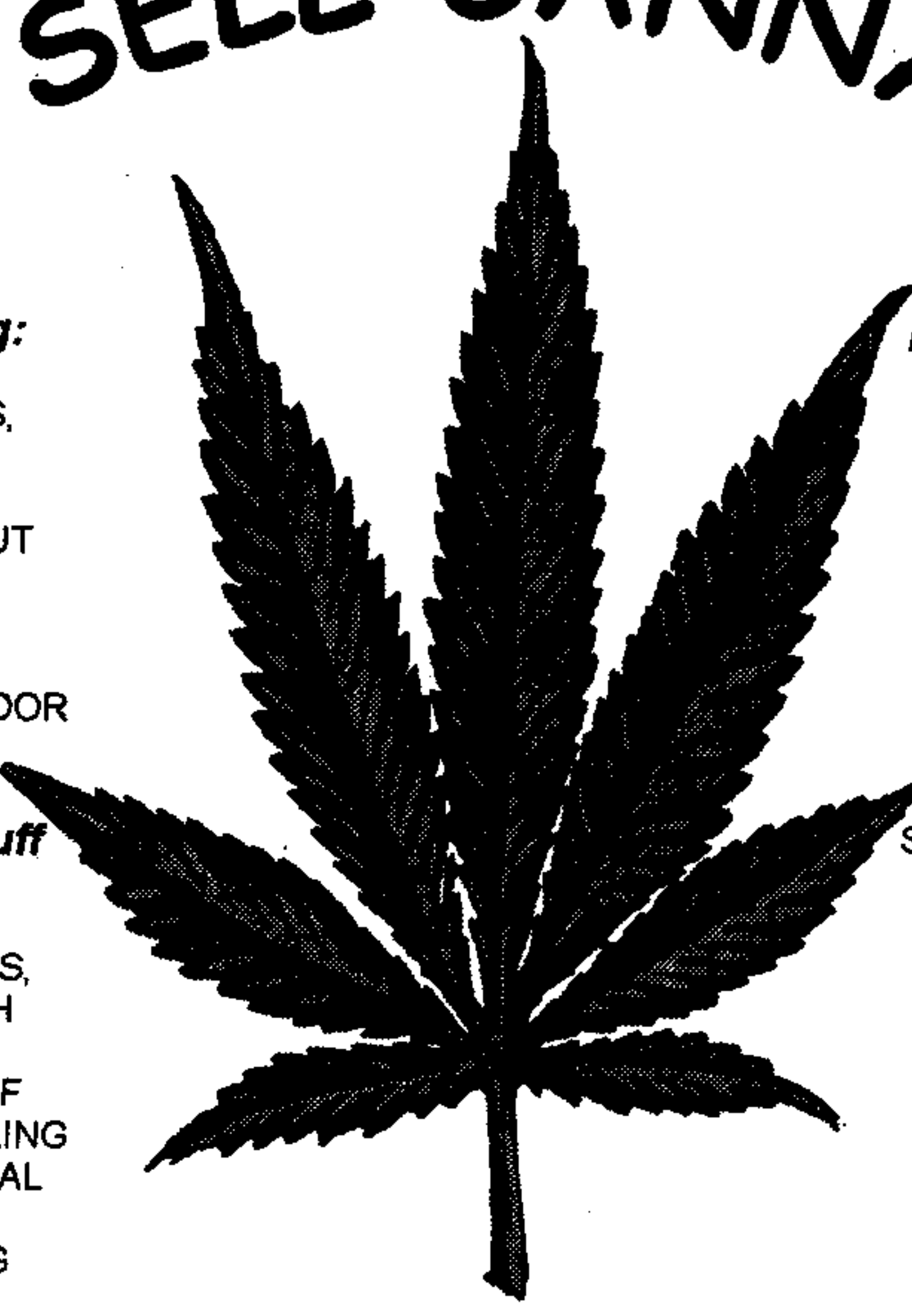


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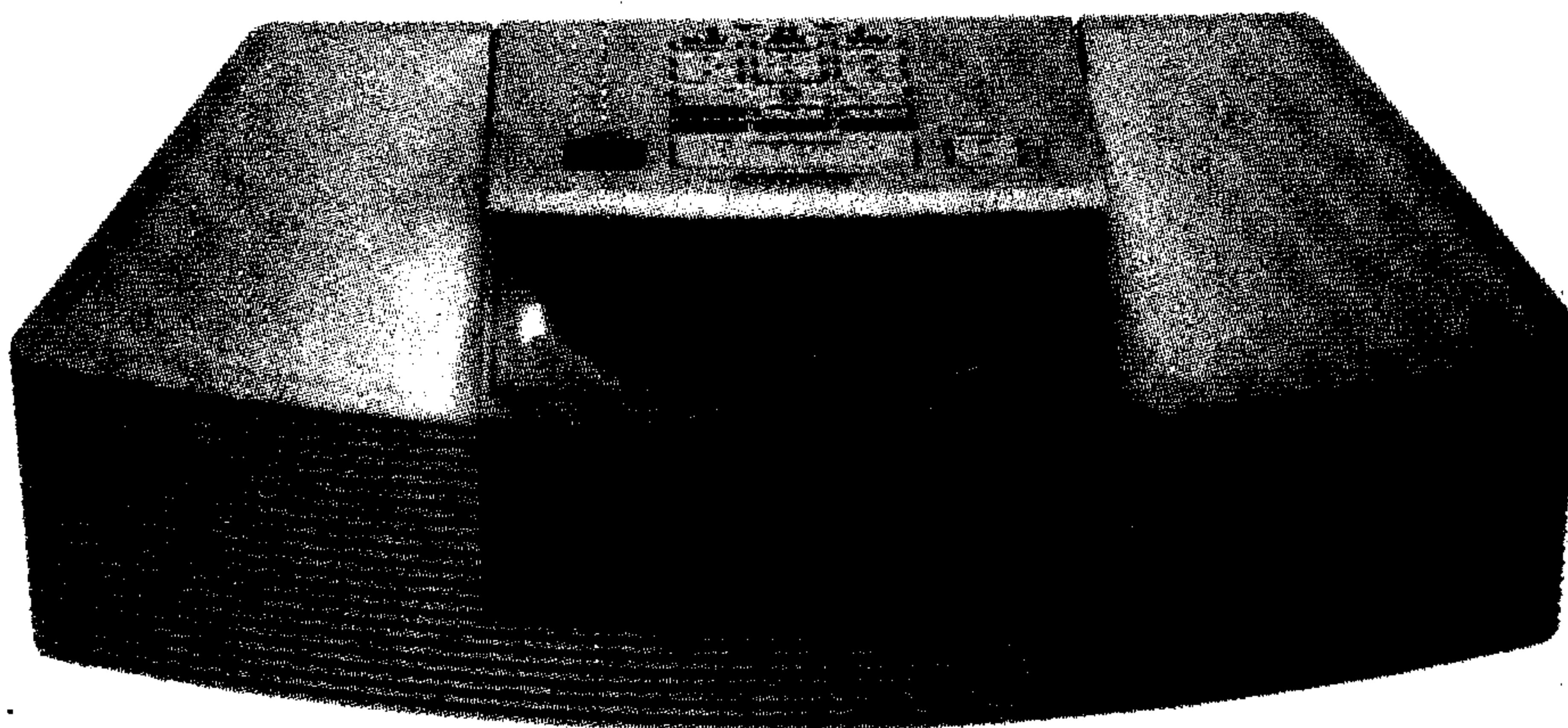
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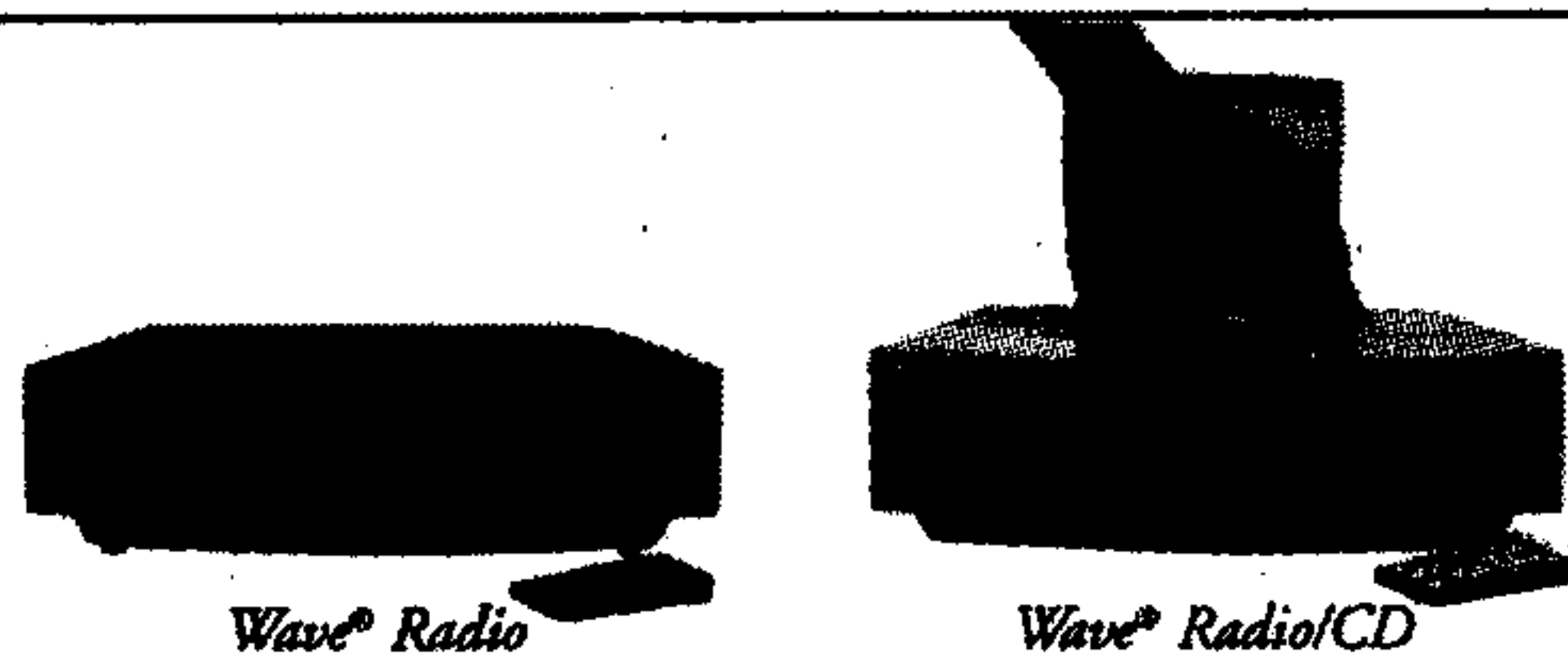
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